Commentary
Volume Fifty-eight, Number Six, December 1974

CULTURE AND THE PRESENT MOMENT

A Round-Table Discussion

EDWARD GROSSMAN
HILTON KRAMER
MICHAEL NOVAK
CYNTHIA OZICK
NORMAN PODHORETZ
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LIONEL TRILLING

Books in Review:
B. Bruce-Briggs
Maurice Friedberg
Renee Winegarten
Carl Gershman
Steven Schlossman
William J. Bennett

The Greening of Judaism Marshall Sklare

Feminist Fiction Jane Larkin Crain

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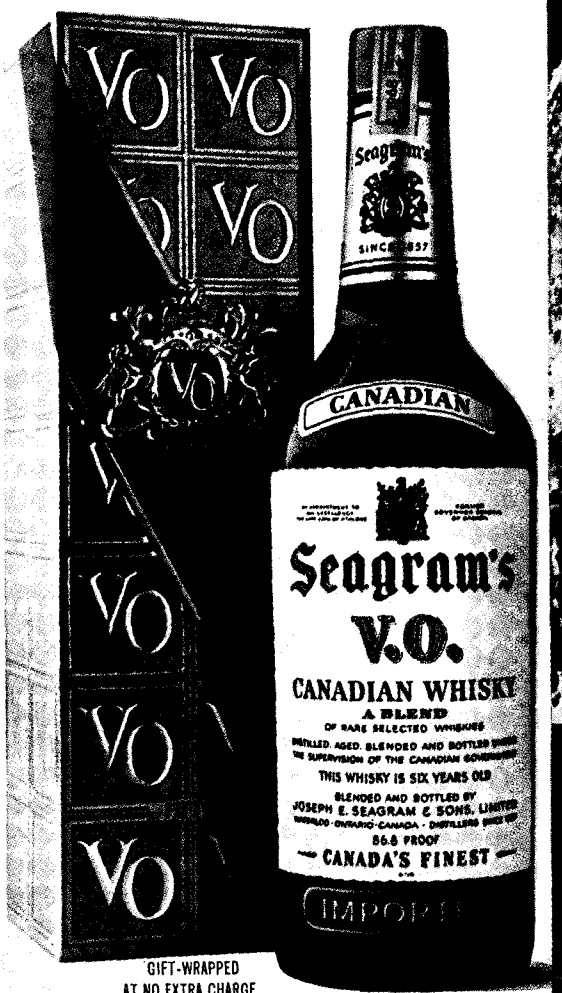

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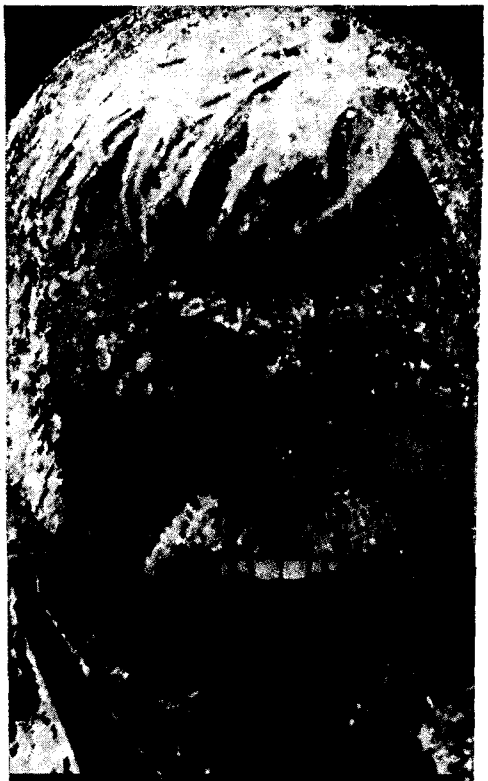

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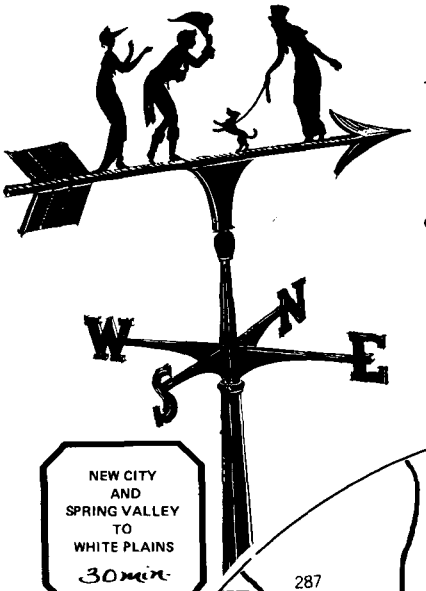

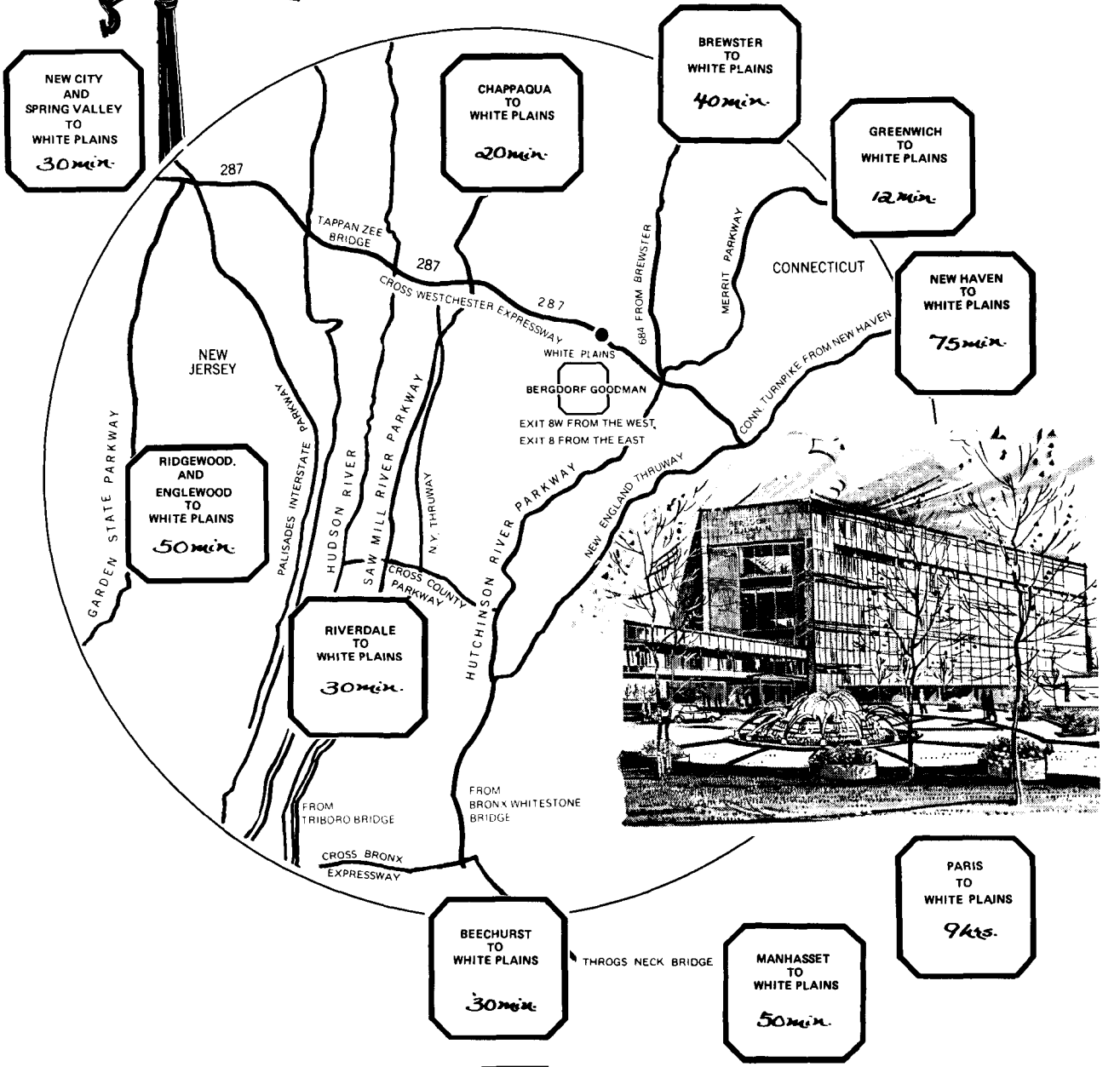
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Commentary

VOLUME 58 NUMBER 6 *DECEMBER 1974*

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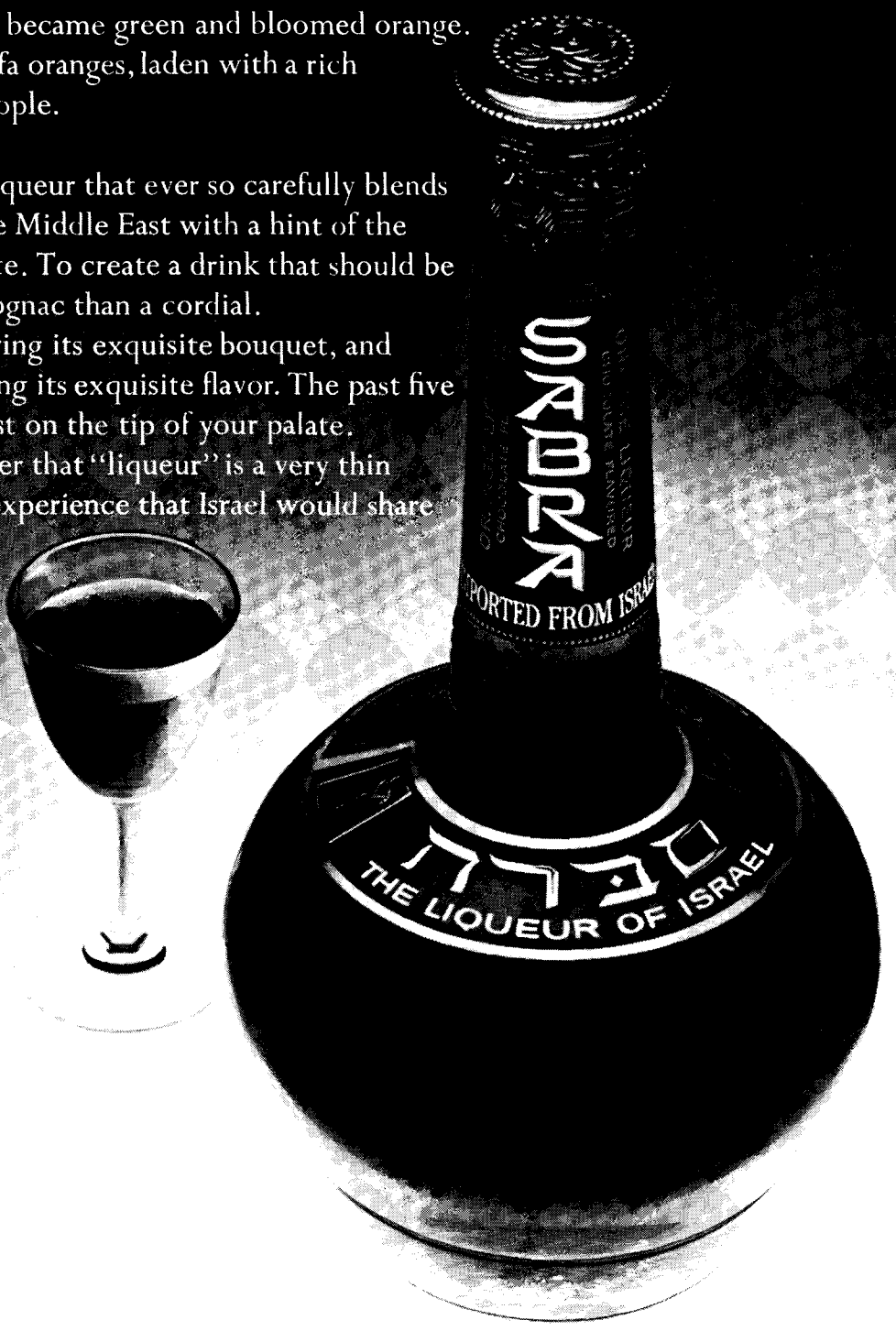

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Letters from Readers

Kissinger & the Yom Kippur War

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I want to comment on the implication in Edward N. Luttwak and Walter Laqueur's article, "Kissinger and the Yom Kippur War" [September], that the American Jewish community was restrained in its political representations to our government by Secretary of State Kissinger's "handling" of Simcha Dinitz, Israel's Ambassador to the United States.

I write from the vantage point of having served as chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations representing the collective political position of almost the entire American Jewish community.

Within several hours of the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War on October 6, as chairman of the Conference, I sent a telegram to Secretary Kissinger calling on the government "to provide all supportive assistance to Israel in this critical hour. . . ."

On Saturday night, the Policy Committee of the Presidents Conference met to plan for the days ahead and on Sunday we brought together at the Plaza Hotel in New York 300 Jewish leaders from across the country to hear Israel Foreign Minister Abba Eban and to advise all present of the need "to communicate by letters and telegrams to the President urging our government to provide supportive assistance to Israel to the extent and of the nature required."

On Monday, October 8, heads of our member organizations issued statements and addressed communications to their members requesting them to contact Congress and the administration to urge immediate support for Israel.

On Tuesday morning, October 9, we addressed a letter to President Nixon calling for the immediate replacement of all Israel's military losses and other supportive assistance which might be required. This letter was signed by myself as chairman of the Presidents Conference; Max Fisher, chairman of the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds; David Blumberg, president of B'nai B'rith; Louis Cole, president of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council; Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg, president of the American Jewish Congress; Mrs. Charlotte Jacobsen, president of the American Section of the World Hadassah; and Rabbi Israel Miller, president of the American Zionist Federation. The letter was hand delivered to the White House by Max Fisher and by Tuesday evening, Mr. Fisher advised us that he had been informed by the White House that Israel would have all military losses replaced.

During the course of Tuesday, October 9, the Presidents Conference assembled 1,000 organizational leaders from across the country to hear Ambassador Dinitz and to hear the first responses of political leaders to the communications which they had been receiving from their Jewish constituents across the country. Among those who responded with expressions of support were Senators Percy, McGovern, Kennedy, and Schweiker. . . .

During this period, Senator Jackson and many others were bringing pressure for the immediate resupply of Israel's military needs. For the balance of the first week of the war, the leadership of the Presidents Conference and the heads of every member organization were in contact with administration officials, Senators, and Congressmen bringing pressure to begin an immediate military resupply of Israel, with particular emphasis on Phantom aircraft.

On Saturday, October 13, we received official word that a massive resupply airlift was underway.

I present this information in detail to reject and repudiate the impression developed by the authors that the political leadership of the American Jewish community was restrained or muted by Ambassador Dinitz of the Israel Embassy in Washington. . . .

The success of Kissinger in his negotiations with Israel and the Arab countries was due in large measure to his absolute candor. It is difficult to accept the authors' conclusion, based on a reading of "coins and epigraphs," that Kissinger practiced duplicity and manipulation; if he had acted in this manner, he would have faced an inevitable loss of his ability to negotiate with the parties and a sorely damaged credibility at home. . . .

In a continuing series of meet-

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ings we had with Kissinger revolving about the events of the Yom Kippur War, he spoke to us in total frankness and with candor and sincerity, and we felt fortunate that so able a person was our Secretary of State. We have seen no evidence to question Kissinger's integrity or to support the authors' thesis that Ambassador Dinitz was "handled" by Kissinger and manipulated into a conspiracy of silence.

The American Jewish community is proud of the role it played during those critical days, and of its prompt, aggressive, and continued pressure on Congress and the administration for full support of Israel; moreover, we welcomed the response of our government.

We are honored that Israel has sent to the United States an ambassador of such competence, dedication, and human response as Ambassador Dinitz and we believe he conducted his affairs during that critical week in a skillful and effective manner.

JACOB STEIN
Conference of Presidents of
Major American Jewish
Organizations
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

"Kissinger and the Yom Kippur War" is a genuine *tour de force*, but I would like to point out an inconsistency. First, Edward N. Luttwak and Walter Laqueur explain that the main reason Kissinger withheld aid from Israel was his hope that the Soviet Union might cooperate with the United States in managing the crisis. Instead of elaborating on this argument, however, Messrs. Luttwak and Laqueur then go on to discuss American Middle East policy and the failure of the various U.S. initiatives to break the Arab-Israeli deadlock. And it is not until the end of the article that they suggest that Kissinger's haste in responding to Moscow's summons, on October 20, was "perhaps" due to his hope of salvaging détente.

Let me suggest that Soviet-American relations were indeed Kissinger's primary concern during the October war, and while the failure of American Middle East diplomacy undoubtedly played its part in determining Kissinger's behavior, it was his desire to preserve the alleged Soviet-American détente which led Kissinger first to withhold arms from Israel and then to rush to Moscow when the Israelis had gained a decisive military advantage.

JOSEPH SHATTAN
Youth Institute for Peace
in the Middle East
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In attempting to uncover the truth about Secretary of State Kissinger's role in the Yom Kippur War, Edward N. Luttwak and Walter Laqueur resort to the methods of the historians of the Roman Empire when a straightforward exercise in logic and a rational testing of political premises would have taken them much closer to the mark. There is surely more to be learned in a careful analysis of the objective facts, as they occurred and as we know them to be, than in attempting, by speculative deduction, to ascertain who was the hero and who the villain.

First, the outbreak of war was a surprise to both the United States and Israel. Second, in the early hours of the war, Israel assured the United States it would rapidly prevail. Kissinger made clear, consonant with this expectation, that losses of aircraft and other consumable items would be replaced as needed. At this juncture it is fair to conclude that both the State Department and the Pentagon were in harmony on policy, and the need to conceive, much less organize, a difficult operational supply airlift, was remote. In the normal run of things, there would necessarily be some bureaucratic delay in replacing Israeli losses, but nothing to cause alarm.

After forty-eight hours of intensive fighting without a decisive Israeli victory, the reality of the battlefield situation began to impose itself and the need for massive supplies and aircraft from the United States became imperative. This is the crucial turn in the historical narrative. The authors imply that the anti-Kissinger version of events, from this point forward, is the correct one. Kissinger dragged his heels, deceived the Israelis, made of the Israeli ambassador a "patsy," and only agreed to the "MAC all-the-way" solution on October 13, a full week into the war, when it became clear that Israel was in mortal danger.

But why, one is impelled to query, would Kissinger behave in this fashion? What policy aims of his would be served?

Kissinger's fundamental policy aim, before and after the war, was to displace the growing Soviet influence in the Middle East and make the United States central to the achievement of peace between the Arabs and Israel. While this policy would dictate a low U.S. profile as long as Israel was in control of the military situation, once the Israeli position on the battlefield became tenuous, the policy would also dictate an immediate American strengthening of the Israeli army. Nothing could have been more harmful to Kissinger's goals than an Israeli defeat, even a limited one, for then the Russians, and not the Americans, would have emerged as central in the postwar diplomacy. Kissinger may well have desired to limit another spectacular Israeli victory (a policy friends of Israel may reasonably support or contest), but there is no basis on which it can be presumed that he desired an Israeli defeat. Yet the thesis of Messrs. Luttwak and Laqueur (and Tad Szulc) is based on this premise.

The truth, it would seem, is that a surprise war got out of hand, expectations of a quick Israeli victory and concomitant low U.S. profile were thwarted, and an emergency airlift under adverse conditions was required. The authors simply ignore the fact that an extraordinarily difficult exercise was in fact mounted in three days and proved to be totally successful. They harp on what seems to the outside observer to be a minimal amount of confusion within the government in pulling this complicated logistical matter together. One does not doubt that some at the Pentagon had objections to the plan, or pushed other versions of the resupply operation. But this systemic confusion need not give rise to a hero-villain version of history. That, it would seem, is permissible only if the authors could prove that the defeat of Israel on the battlefield was in the interest of U.S. policy, and this they have not even attempted to do.

Israel's long-term security is fragile. There are legitimate differences of view about the means to strengthen that fragility, including a division of opinion both here and in Israel as to the value of a crushing Israeli defeat of her Arab neighbors. In view of the diplomatic gains, albeit small, which followed the October war, friends of Israel are compelled to ask what is to be gained by undermining an American Secretary of State whose bona-fide commitment to disentan-

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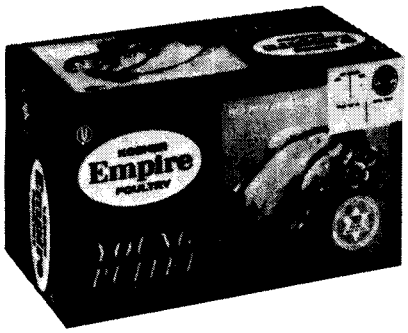

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gling the most deep-seated political conflict of our times has been demonstrated repeatedly. Must the bile that has infected the long Arab-Israeli conflict spill over to destroy his credibility with both sides and thus reduce American diplomacy in the Middle East to ashes?

This is surely one of the probable consequences of Messrs. Luttwak and Laqueur's irresponsible exercise in pseudo-history.

RITA E. HAUSER
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

We know by now that evenhandedness is a hoary goddess, at least when applied to the Middle East. But Edward N. Luttwak and Walter Laqueur lay claim to just such detachment about two conflicting accounts of the politics and diplomacy that secured American military aid to Israel last October. Like others who attempt evenhandedness, they too have produced a fractious and tendentious account. . . .

Messrs. Luttwak and Laqueur mislead their readers, I think, on two points: the role of Henry Kissinger and that of Israel Ambassador Simcha Dinitz during the crisis. But of course these are the only points made in the article (the only other one would seem to be to relieve the Pentagon of any responsibility for delays in the shipment of supplies). . . . Much of the case against Kissinger is based on speculations about President Nixon's private attitudes toward Israel, the Russians, the structure of power in his cabinet, and finally toward the Secretary of State himself. It may suffice, then, simply to raise some questions about the confident assumptions on which these speculations are based. In any case, I am not, as the authors were not, privy to anything like an absolutely reliable informant (could there be one?) on the inter- and intra-agency disputes which figure in the divergent Kalb and Szulc accounts. But as for Ambassador Dinitz and his embassy, the situation is altogether different. I know from my own experience and from that of others, some deeply and some only peripherally involved, that the facts are just not as Messrs. Luttwak and Laqueur recount them. . . .

Perhaps to magnify the culpability of those whom they wish to blame for the time it took to mount a full-scale American resupply

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operation for Israel, the authors assert that the delay lasted eight days—from Yom Kippur morning, Saturday, October 6, to Saturday, October 13. With 2,500 Israeli dead, it may perhaps seem to be quibbling to suggest that even the somewhat disguised evidence presented in the article indicates a delay not of over a week but of perhaps half that time. For it is tragically true that both Israeli and American intelligence estimates misjudged the capacity of the Egyptian and Syrian armies to inflict losses on Israel and to sustain their offensive thrusts. In Israel, optimistic twists were often put on grim news by seasoned military observers: the tide in the first days was always about to turn or actually had turned. We know from Israeli military sources that they suffered significant casualties simply because of mistakes in evaluating the extent of the Egyptian infantry's capability with anti-tank missiles and of Israeli reverses. Indeed, it was not really until Tuesday, or Monday night at the very earliest, that anyone appeared to realize that this war was not going to be a casual replay of 1956 and 1967. An understanding of the time perspective is important because what Israel ultimately pressed for and finally received by way of massive military support in a very short period was simply unprecedented for the United States, though unhappily not for the Soviet Union.

Lest anyone minimize the dimensions of Israel's demands—and the success of her diplomacy on this count—it should be understood, for example, that the air-to-air missiles that were replaced constituted fully one-third of America's reserves in that category. Moreover, if one wants to appraise from the outside both the magnitude of the obstacles faced by the Israeli ambassador in gaining needed help and the points of resistance to that help, one should also take into account the fact that tanks, planes, and rockets were moved not simply from dead storage but from operational bases whose American officers were scarcely anxious to see their commands denuded. Does this count for nothing in appraising the Defense Department's posture vis-a-vis Israel? Messrs. Luttwak and Laqueur, for all their pretense at logistical sophistication, seem unaware of even so elementary a factor in bureaucratic behavior as pressure from reluctant underlings; their view of the American political situation as it affected Israel's requirements is even more shallow. This is critical because Ambassador Dinitz showed himself to be a most deft navigator in these quite dangerous waters—and at a particularly tempestuous moment in national affairs.

But the authors will have no truck with such complexities: Kissinger functioned, in their view, as "foreign-policy czar," virtually an unmoved mover, without buts, ifs, ands, or maybes. In a manner reminiscent of the conspiracy hypotheses of Left journalists, they see the United States government as a single rational actor—personified not in a vague class interest but in one very particular person. Perhaps only to expand on Kissinger's imputed infamy in delaying arms to Israel, Messrs. Laqueur and Luttwak slyly hint that he was also frustrating Nixon's stated wish to expedite such aid. Given their characterization of Kissinger as possessing near-plenary power, however, they are reluctant to picture Nixon as exercising too much power himself. But they do invoke him in his Presidential grandeur as someone who would not have brooked Pentagon opposition to speedy and adequate aid to Israel. Why then would he brook State Department foot-dragging? And conversely, if he had the capacity to exert himself against either a recalcitrant State or Defense Department, is it so inconceivable that he might—just might—have been a restraint on a policy of immediate assistance to Israel, a constraint in fact on Kissinger himself?

On the record, this would not be so surprising: in 1956, during and after the Sinai campaign, Nixon had teamed up with Dulles in pursuing a hard line against Israel; he sponsored and stood by the Rogers plan which gravely compromised Israel's security; the Watergate tapes amply prove his primitive enmity toward Jews; and the Jewish constituency was one that—*pace* Rabbi Korff—was not going to be helpful to him with his own survival problems. Moreover, it was in Nixon's urgent interest that the aura of détente with Russia not be disturbed by provocative friendship with Israel. Détente was after all his one and only remaining credit.

Now, we do know that on October 10 the President did order a resupply of equipment lost by Israel during the war. No one has claimed, however, that this order was anything but vague as to the details of priorities and timing. Someone as experienced as Nixon must have known that an unspecific directive is an invitation to bureaucratic wrangling and evasions. And these occurred, as every account agrees.

In less than three days, however, the President's order was made quite concrete and specific, and the airlift went into full swing. But if Kissinger was the undisputed authority Messrs. Luttwak and Laqueur say he was, does he not merit some credit for this—at least for overcoming the traditional Arabist bias in his own Department which he had taken over only a short time earlier? The authors are even willing to concede that some credit may be warranted, though they insist that he timed the resupply, that is, delayed it, to secure America's maximum leverage for the ensuing diplomacy. But why did this leverage entail delay? The Russians surely could have been counted upon to press for a ceasefire as soon as Israel was close to a decisive military victory. But the Israeli successes on Egyptian territory proper—not in unpopulated Sinai—which Kissinger needed to establish his or America's own fulcrum position required prompt military aid, and no delay in supplying it. For given the emerging catastrophe, delay could only have resulted in exactly what Kissinger did not want: 1) a situation in which the Russians were pivotally placed behind victorious Arabs, and 2) inevitable demands for a direct American intervention on behalf of Israel.

Fortunately for Israel, its emissary saw more clearly—or at least argued more forcefully—than anyone else that America's interest lay in a prompt and adequate resupply of Israel's depleted strength to enable her forces to repel the Egyptian and Syrian armies beyond the pre-1967 boundaries. Otherwise, what could the Americans (and the Israelis) possibly offer the Arabs as an inducement to compromise after the next ceasefire? Dinitz was also shrewd enough to recognize both Kissinger's centrality in the administration *and* his limitations. His relationship with the Secretary had to be of singular importance: no one else had comparable access to the President on foreign policy and no one else was likely ever to act as his surrogate on these mat-

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ters. In this circumstance, Dinitz could cross Kissinger only in the greatest extremity. Given the inner chaos and fears of the Nixon administration, to have sought polemical confrontations might well have endangered Israel's immediate and overriding interests and created additional and irrational justification for the U.S. government to avoid the hard choices.

Understanding this, Dinitz pursued a measured but nonetheless firm strategy of pressure on the Secretary and through him on the President. I cite only a few instances about which Messrs. Luttwak and Laqueur should have known; since they do not allude to them, we can charitably assume that they do not know of them. But then, what credibility can we give their account of the ambassador's functioning—even remotely—as an instrument of Kissinger's policy?

Dinitz returned from Israel on Sunday, the day after the war started. On Monday, he met in a private home with Senators Church, Hart, McGee, Mondale, and Symington and perhaps two or three other public figures. On Tuesday, I myself spoke with one of the Senators who had attended the meeting and he recounted the dire report which Dinitz had given. Extrapolating pessimistically from his reading of incomplete but not encouraging reports, Dinitz argued that a military disaster was in the offing and that Israel's friends in Congress had best mobilize quickly. Anyone in touch with events in Washington during those days knows that this message was repeated in countless briefings and conversations and that these efforts resulted in a continuous outpouring of support for Israel from genuinely influential figures. Since there are also in Washington several journalists whom Dinitz sees regularly, why didn't Messrs. Luttwak and Laqueur check to see what message he was giving them?

The message, in any event, was not limited to simple exhortation. In the early days of the war, the embassy did not discourage American politicians from saddling the administration with added moral responsibility for what was taking place because of its pressure, that is, Kissinger's pressure, against a first strike. (This was somewhat irresponsible, it now appears, since we now know that the Israeli cabinet had decided on its own not to attack preemptively.) The authors did not even consult *Near East Report*, the weekly journal of the registered Israel lobby, to see what line was taken by Jerusalem's quasi-official spokesmen in America. . . . They would have found there nothing like the pliant temper they try to evoke.

Particularly illuminating also is the argument urged by the ambassador on Israel's liberal allies in Congress. He pointed out to them that they had a stick to wield over the Secretary, that the war in the Middle East was a test of Kissinger's European policy and the reliability of the NATO alliance. If the permanent presence of American materiel on American bases in the Mediterranean and in Central Europe would not be a factor in the defense of Israel, and if American support for the most dubious governments in the region would not facilitate aid to Israel at this critical juncture, then that policy and that alliance would have been proved worthless to America and its declared interests. This was a serious challenge to Kissinger, and those who made it assumed responsibility for the charge in connection with that policy and that alliance in the future. Nor is this an argument which would be made by a pliant and timid ambassador.

One of Dinitz's tasks was to stimulate support from pivotal figures in Congress on very concrete and politically vexing matters. These included, for example, the landing of American pilots in American transport planes in an active combat zone. He also had to persuade Senators who had opposed production of some weapons and aircraft that they now urge the same ones should be sent to Israel. But Dinitz also had every reason to avoid such issues becoming matters of Congressional debate. What mischief Fulbright might have fomented as he mustered McGovern, Aiken, Mansfield, to name only those on the Foreign Relations Committee, to his side—to say nothing of the other "reliable" foes of Israel in the Senate, eager always to evoke the specter of "another Vietnam." It is difficult to understand how Messrs. Luttwak and Laqueur can be so oblivious to the risks of an indiscriminate popular rally behind specific and technical needs. In any case, they do ignore the fact that by Tuesday there had already been introduced a "Sense of Congress" resolution supporting Israel in general terms and subsequently endorsed by seventy Senators and more than half of the House.

I am not . . . "soft" on Kissinger, though I believe he was rightly the critical focus of Israeli attention. And if, for whatever reason, he may have initially favored logistical nightmares like private charters and island-hopping to transport arms to Israel, this only means that he needed more attention and persuasion. Now it may well be true that he also wanted a low American profile in aid to Israel. But the Defense Department also demanded this. On Wednesday and Thursday, October 10 and 11, for example, El Al aircraft were picking up supplies in Norfolk, Virginia, but they had their distinctive markings painted over at the insistence of the Pentagon. Given such squeamishness at the Pentagon, the ambassador clearly had a rough job ahead of him with Secretary Schlesinger, who must already have been conscious of the oil pressure the Arabs would apply on American bases generally and of the not-so-small American supply commitment to Indochina. But it was difficult for Dinitz even to see the Defense Secretary. His Wednesday appointment was postponed to Thursday, and this one was in turn postponed to Friday. I know of one long-time Senatorial friend of both Israel and the defense establishment who tried unsuccessfully to bring Schlesinger out of hiding while Israel was in peril. When Schlesinger and the ambassador finally met on Friday, Dinitz was told that the American government could send three transports every two days—and that when six planes had left, the arrangement would be reviewed. Messrs. Luttwak and Laqueur apparently do not credit this altogether inadequate Pentagon maneuver, although on the night it was executed staff members of the Senate Armed Services Committee were already aware of it and were working with some committee members to have its provisions dramatically increased.

The article demonstrates no recognition of the hazardous environment in which Dinitz operated and in which he produced for Israel more equipment than the United States had ever before authorized to be sent anywhere else at one time. An unpredictable, preoccupied, and besieged President sat in the White House; an Arab oil boycott of tremendous consequence was already in the offing; the coun-

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try was in an isolationist mood, or at least a retrenching one; Congressional support for Israel remained quite broad, but also seemed thin on matters of substance; America's European allies, including the client Greek dictatorship, were not being cooperative on the matter of transport; even the Portuguese were showing signs of truculence; détente, to an administration desperate that it be sustained, seemed to be imperiled; vast expenditures of funds were expected from a contracting economy; and it was difficult to overcome the "certainty" of an inevitable Israeli victory, even in the face of the most frightful evidence that a defeat was quite possible. All of these obstacles were transcended by the efforts made at the major and only successful propaganda command post of the October war, the Israeli embassy in Washington. The Jewish community was mobilized to provide unprecedented financial support to the UJA and maintain the momentum of carefully orchestrated and pointed political pressure in Washington. The American labor movement, the academy, even most of the churches, were organized into some sort of corporate activity for Israel. And sufficient arms were made available so that the soldiers of Israel could repel the aggressors back to where they started and beyond. For his role in this achievement, Dinitz should be honored and not submitted to the sniping of writers who have not bothered to check even the most self-evident sources. And those who are concerned for Israel's security should also ponder the implications of having an ambassador with whom the Secretary of State—any Secretary of State—cannot work in harmony.

MARTIN PERETZ
The New Republic
Washington, D.C.

EDWARD N. LUTTWAK and WALTER LAQUEUR write:

It is always encouraging to see how deep and widespread is the concern of the American Jewish community for the security of Israel, and we share this fundamental concern with the correspondents. Our attempt to establish what happened in Washington last October is not, of course, the last word on the subject; even since we wrote new facts have emerged. To give but one example, the role played by President Nixon in the decision-making process turns out to have been even less important than we had assumed. In the years to come the main *dramatis personae* will no doubt have their say and relevant documents will also be published, and as a result a clearer picture will emerge. Meanwhile, students of history have certain advantages over politicians (or citizens with political ambitions): they have no axe to grind, no special interest to support, and they are uncommitted by political friendships or personal loyalties. In short, although they may not have frequent access to Secretaries of State, Senators, and ambassadors, they are better placed to take a detached look at the evidence precisely because they are not active participants in the political game.

We read with interest Jacob Stein's letter on the activities of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Organizations. Needless to say, we contest none of his facts, and any doubts we may have about his opinions on the qualities of particular individuals are unimportant. Let us merely note that nowhere in Mr. Stein's letter is it suggested that Ambassador Dinitz appealed to him to put pressure on the administration at a time when Israel needed help and had not yet received it. As for the rest, no comment is needed. It must be a source of satisfaction to all that a man of Mr. Stein's dedication is in the service of the Jewish community; our article, however, was not an attempt to analyze the initiatives of Jewish leadership but rather the decision-making process in the higher echelons of government.

We have no quarrel with Joseph Shattan's interpretation of events. One merely hesitates to go very far in imputing motives when it is already so difficult even to determine the course of events.

Rita E. Hauser appears to have misinterpreted what we were trying to say. We made it perfectly clear that we were not engaged in a search for "heroes" and "villains." We did not call the Israeli ambassador a "patsy." We did not argue that Secretary of State Kissinger's goal was an Israeli defeat, and it is ridiculous to suggest that the article was based on this premise. The point is that Kissinger did not want another major Israeli victory, as Mrs. Hauser herself suggests, or, to put it another way, he did not want another crushing Arab defeat—hence his hasty departure to Moscow once the Israelis had crossed the Canal. This position was, by the way, perfectly consistent with a proper concern for Israel's ultimate security.

Martin Peretz moves perilously close to accepting some of our basic arguments (the "logistical nightmares" and the "low profile in aid to Israel"). Elsewhere, like Mrs. Hauser, he deals not with what we wrote but what he infers from it ("culpability," the "wish to blame," "sniping," etc., etc.). We have no reason to doubt that Mr. Peretz is well-informed about the activities of the Israeli embassy during the war; sections of his letter, by coincidence no doubt, are almost identical with an interview given by Ambassador Dinitz in the Israeli daily, *Yediot Ahronot,* last October. One should note at this point that Mr. Peretz himself points out, quite correctly, that there is no such thing as an absolutely reliable informant. In any case, the focus of our article was not on the operations of the Israeli embassy during the war.

Mr. Peretz's letter contains a number of gross errors which must cast doubt on his broader conclusions. For example, where he writes of air-to-air missiles he must mean air-to-ground missiles: U.S. inventories of AAM's are much larger than those of air-to-ground missiles and their supply was not a probem. Mr. Peretz speaks of "pressure from reluctant underlings," meaning, no doubt, resistance. (After accusing us of thinking in terms of the "rational-actor" model, he himself exhibits an implicit belief in a rather crude bureaucratic-analysis model.) As a matter of fact, Israel enjoyed—and still enjoys—a great deal of support inside the U.S. services and certainly in the air force. Without going into details of a somewhat delicate nature, it should suffice to point out that once the decision to initiate the airlift was finally made at the political level, the airlift began almost immediately. This was not unconnected to the fact that at the service level opportune action had been taken before the order was given. (What, incidentally, has "logistical sophistication" got to do with bureaucratic behavior and our understanding thereof?)

Among other errors of substance is Mr. Peretz's version of the Kalb brothers' tale of the one-and-

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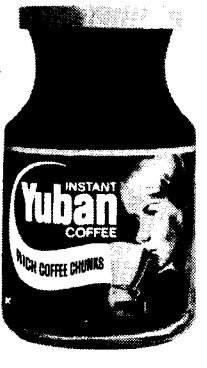

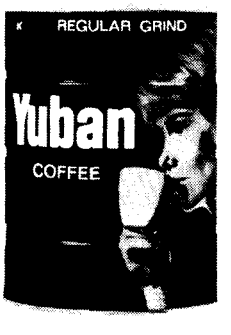

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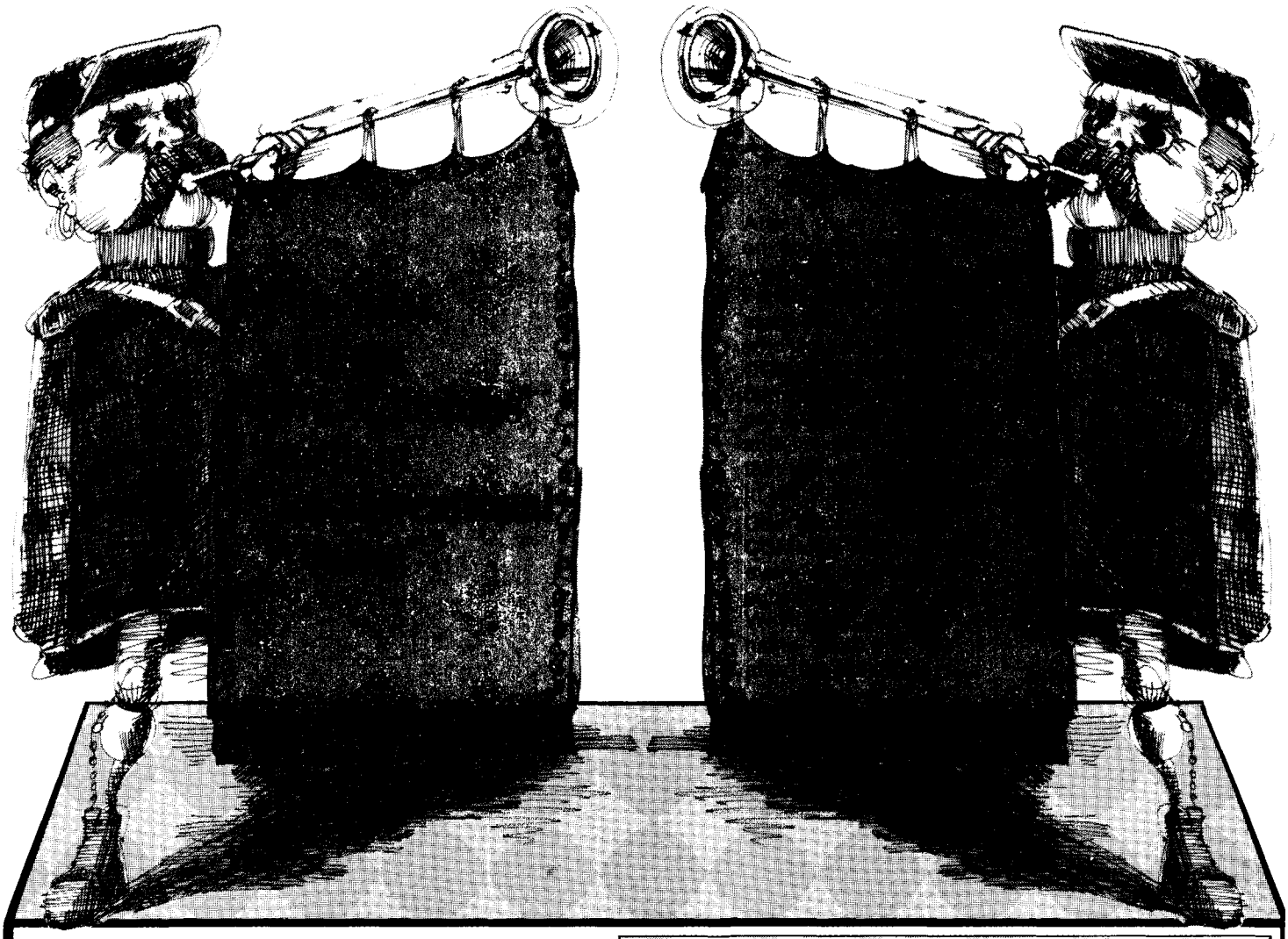

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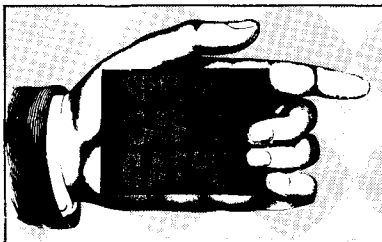

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a-half aircraft a day. In Mr. Peretz's account the one-and-a-half aircraft become transports instead of F-4 fighters, thus making nonsense of the whole story. The fact is that El Al alone could have flown much more material to Israel than Mr. Peretz's mythical six transports—so that Secretary Schlesinger's purported offer of six "planes" would have been ridiculous as well as inadequate. No such offer was made. (Incidentally, the Kalbs wrote of C-130's, medium transports, where they should have written C-141's, full-size jet transports. The C-130's could not carry a useful payload on the long Azores-Israel flight. Some were sent, but as supply items, to serve as intra-theater transports.)

Mr. Peretz draws our attention to the fact that the situation in Washington was complicated, that Kissinger faced difficulties, that there was a failure of American and Israeli intelligence, that Fulbright is not a staunch supporter of the State of Israel, that Dinitz had to operate in a "hazardous environment," that an oil embargo was feared, that it is important for Israel to have an ambassador with whom the Secretary of State can work in harmony. There may be no harm in repeating what everyone knows, but it does not serve to advance our understanding of complex issues. Mr. Peretz's letter leaves off where the real problems start.

The Role of Lawyers

To the Editor of Commentary:

In "Lawyers at the Bar" [August] Joseph W. Bishop, Jr. gives the back of his hand to a statement of mine that the record of the lawyers around Richard Nixon is "appalling" and that there has been "nothing like it" in our history. Mr. Bishop evidently cannot resist expressing scorn, however gratuitous, and that is his privilege. But I do wonder about the facts.

Kleindienst, Mitchell, Connally (lawyers in Mr. Nixon's Cabinet); Ehrlichman, Colson, Dean (Counsels to the President); Liddy, Hunt, Krogh (White House staff); Kalmbach, DeMarco (personal lawyers), and Agnew.

Does Mr. Bishop really doubt that that record is appalling? Can he point to any comparable episode in our history?

Anthony Lewis
New York *Times*
New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

Joseph W. Bishop, Jr. complains of "new legal activists," some of whom are trying to "use the legal system to circumvent the political system and to settle in the courts and the bureaucracies issues which under our form of democracy are supposed to be decided by the people and their elected representatives." As prime examples Mr. Bishop cites the lawyers who, in the *DeFunis* case, supported the freedom of the law school of the University of Washington to choose, if it wished, a racially-conscious admissions policy giving black and other minority applicants a degree of preference necessary to increase minority enrollment. Mr. Bishop *says* that he is not debating the "wisdom or morality" of this policy but that he objects to removing it and other questions such as capital punishment and abortion from the "ordinary political methods of a democracy and settling them in the name of the Constitution." May I point out—having been named by Mr. Bishop—that in the *DeFunis* case the shoe is on the other foot?

The *amicus curiae* brief filed by Harvard University, like others, argued that state educational authorities should have discretion to adopt whichever of many varieties of admissions programs they judged best, including, if they wished, a preference for disadvantaged and theretofore underrepresented minorities. In making such decisions state educational authorities act as the agents of the people. Under our argument the people would be free to make the choice of admissions programs themselves, if they wished, either by a referendum or through their elected representatives. This position plainly leaves the states and their people—and Congress and the American people—maximum freedom in the sphere of education to solve by the ordinary political methods of a democracy, as best they can, the intensely difficult problems of defining and securing for all truly "equal educational opportunities."

Equally plainly, the holding that the University of Washington denied DeFunis equal protection of the laws—which Mr. Bishop advocates—would deny this discretion to the states and their people, would remove the question from the democratic forum, and would bar the people from ever resolving, whether through educational authorities or by legislation, that the public interest is best served and the most equitable distribution of a scarce resource best achieved by conscious attention to the racial composition of each class entering the university. Thus, it is Mr. Bishop who, in relation to the *DeFunis* case, is violating his own general admonition.

Mr. Bishop blurs the inconsistency—or inadvertently fell into it—by two errors.

1) He gibes that the law school of the university is "run by lawyers," and thus omits the undeniable truth that they are not only acting pursuant to a responsibility delegated by the legislature but are subject to legislative control and direction. Nor does he note the equally undeniable truth that a decision invalidating the policy adopted by the law school would bar its adoption by the legislature and the people.

2) He lumps the "legal activists" who oppose judicial interference in the name of the Constitution in the same class with those ready to argue that the Constitution "commands discrimination on the basis of race, so long as the discrimination favors members of the right races." His strictures are fairly applicable only to the latter group, but he applies them as well to all who disagree with him upon the *DeFunis* case.

Mr. Bishop does a service in pointing out that social "reforms" engineered by courts and bureaucracy are imposed without a decision by the people or their representatives. The substantial difficulties in putting together a popular or legislative majority may enable the "legal activists" to carry the day even though the reforms lack popular support. The only alternatives are either to put the obstacles in the path of reform or else to make more refined distinctions than all-out opposition to "legal activism." In the case of constitutional decisions, of course, an activist ruling may wholly defeat the democratic process. One regrets Mr. Bishop's obscuring this last principle by attempting to stand it upon its head in order to reach the result he desires in a particular case.

Archibald Cox
Cambridge, England

To the Editor of Commentary:

Joseph W. Bishop, Jr.'s article refers critically to the increasing resort of socially-minded lawyers

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to by-pass the legislative forum in order to achieve "social reform, protection of the oppressed and the environment, and general moral and social uplift." He cites judicial or administrative resolution of such problems as the retention of capital punishment, preferential university admissions on the basis of race, busing as a means of overcoming segregation, and abortion on demand. (Mr. Bishop might have added the reapportionment cases to this list.)

I share Mr. Bishop's concern with what appears to be a growing apathy to the legislative process as a means of securing social change. It is doubtful that judges or bureaucrats possess more wisdom than legislators, assuming that such a comparison is at all possible. But Mr. Bishop's thesis is seriously and unnecessarily weakened by a snide reference to lawyers who go to a government administrator or a court for relief when legislators cannot or will not act. "Their attitude toward the democratic process, in fact, bears an odd resemblance to that of the Nixon lawyers who installed bugs, burglarized the office of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist, and attempted to audit the tax returns of their enemies. . . ." I am confident that in their legal proceedings to halt capital punishment, institute or increase the use of busing, uphold the privilege of a woman to abort her fetus, or equalize the voting power of citizens, there was no violation of law by any lawyer.

SIDNEY SCHINDLER
Putnam Valley, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Thanks are due Joseph W. Bishop, Jr. for his article on the American legal profession. The erosion of our democratic polity by the increasing recourse to the judiciary, the least representative, the least responsive branch of government, and the least equipped to deal with issues of social and economic policy is a phenomenon that has long needed to be examined.

An added word of warning is in order. The activists who lead the current rush to the courts are ignoring a history with which they surely must be familiar. It was not so long ago that the Fourteenth Amendment, now invoked in the causes of liberation and reform, was the main instrument used by the Supreme Court to invalidate measures taken to modernize and humanize our social order—among others, limitations on the hours of work, a minimum wage, a ban on child labor. Rent control, social security, unemployment insurance, statutory support for the right to unionize and bargain collectively escaped the axe by the narrowest margin of a single vote, five to four.

Great acclaim has been accorded the Supreme Court for striking down the rule of "separate, but equal." Overlooked is the fact that it was the Court itself and not Congress that promulgated this rule to begin with. Responsibility for the discrimination which this rule spawned lies at the door of the Court. In the end, all it did was to rectify its mistake. So it is with the Court's recent decisions in the area of civil rights for which it has been given such high praise. These decisions can fairly be regarded as atonement for the Court's nullifying of the broad civil-rights legislation that Congress enacted at the close of the Civil War for the protection of the newly enfranchised.

For almost a quarter-century the equity of an income tax was denied us because the Supreme Court, responsive to the plea of powerful corporate interests, declared such a tax to be unconstitutional. This despite its decision at an earlier time holding such a tax to be valid when the purpose of its enactment was purely fiscal and untainted by the radical concept of taxation in accordance with the ability to pay, as was the case with the later law.

There is no possible doubt that it is legal to refuse to render service when the working conditions are unsatisfactory. Yet the courts were quick to find an unlawful conspiracy when this clear right was exercised by workers in concert, thereby achieving an effectiveness that lone action could not. The "yellow dog" contract derived its force from court decisions, not legislative enactment. To the contrary, early statutes prohibiting this kind of contract were struck down by the Supreme Court as doing violence to freedom of action safeguarded by the Constitution. The present-day lawyer reads with amazement bordering on disbelief the sweeping injunctions issued against unions, not infrequently without notice, banning activities which later judges dis-

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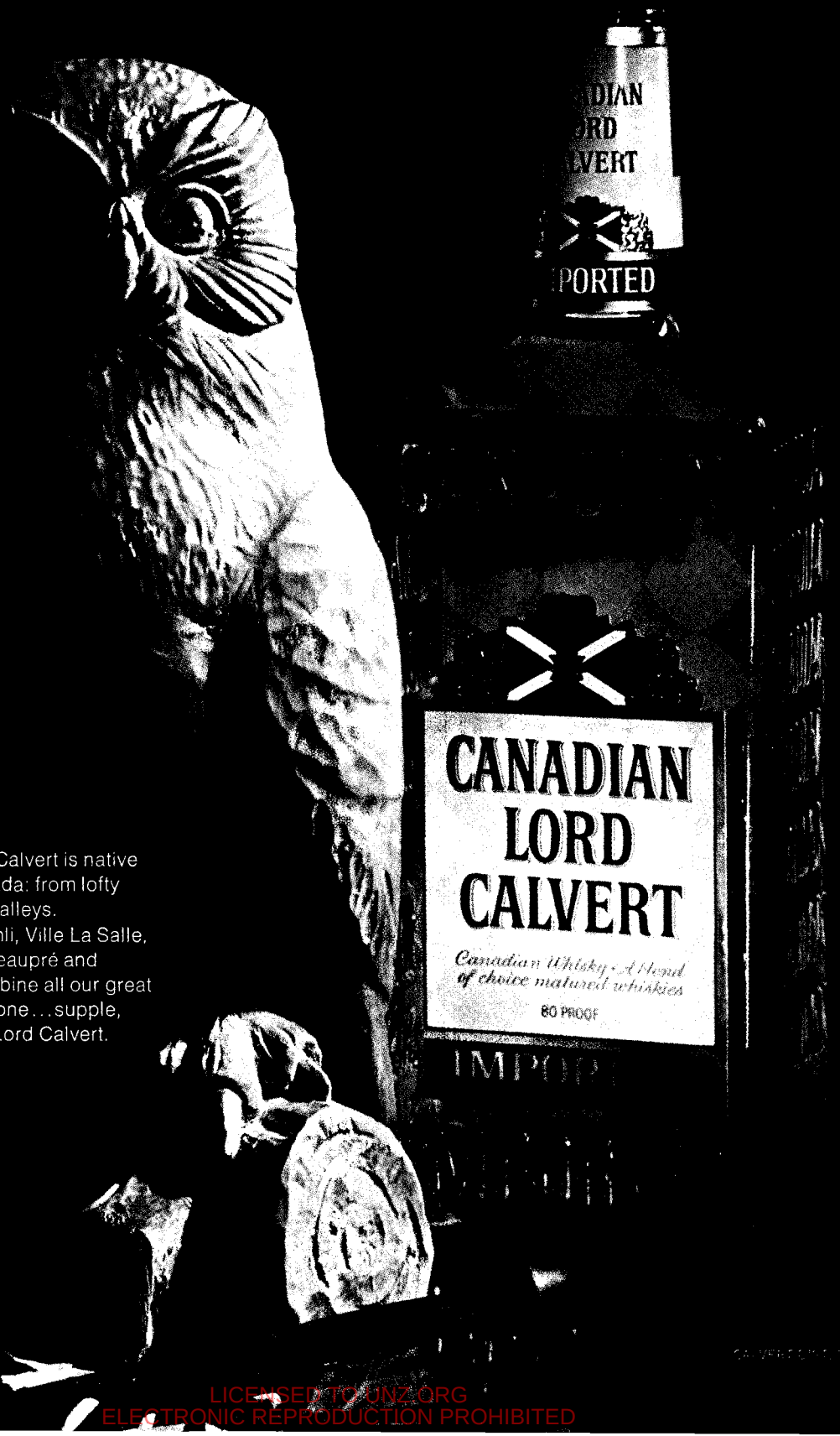

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covered to be constitutionally protected.

In the course of time there will be new judges. We cannot now know who they will be or what views they will hold on the social and economic problems of the day. But if the course of current decisions continues it will have placed in their hands a power of governance superior and far more controlling than that held by representative, elected officials. . . .

HERMAN A. GRAY
Pine Plains, New York

JOSEPH W. BISHOP, JR. writes:

I must preface my comments on the letters about my article by saying that I am at present at the University of Cambridge (where, incidentally, Archibald Cox is also) and so do not have my notes.

Whether I was wrong to be less "appalled" than Anthony Lewis is largely a question of semantics. Obviously, I did not condone or approve of the conduct of the lawyers he mentions (most of whom I mentioned too), but I was not "overcome with consternation or horror," which is Webster's definition of "appall." I suppose I am simply of a more cynical cast of mind than Mr. Lewis, which may well be a difference in his favor. As for "comparable episode[s] in our history," at least three come to mind immediately. The Crédit Mobilier scandal of 1865-69, thoroughly investigated by Congress in 1872-73, involved Schuyler Colfax (later Vice President under Grant), James A. Garfield (later President), and several other members of Congress. Garfield was a lawyer, as were one or two of the other Congressmen. (Garfield ultimately escaped censure because after a couple of years of hesitation, he yielded to the urging of his friend, Jeremiah Black, and returned the Crédit Mobilier stock which had been given him as a bribe.) The Erie Railroad scandal of a century ago, brilliantly chronicled by Charles Francis Adams and his brother Henry in *Chapters of Erie,* involved the corruption of at least four Justices of the New York Supreme Court, including Albert Cardozo, the father of Benjamin Nathan. The scandals of the Harding administration led to the jailing of the Secretary of the Interior, Albert Fall, and the Alien Property Custodian, Thomas Miller—the latter, I believe, a lawyer, though I am not certain. The Attorney General, Harry Daugherty, a lawyer of course, took the Fifth Amendment and managed to hang the jury. All of these episodes —and the list is very far from comprehensive—seem to me quite comparable to Watergate.

Archibald Cox's thoughtful letter does not, I think, state my position quite correctly. I recognize, of course, that judicial interpretation and enforcement of the Constitution is part of our democratic process. The purpose of the Bill of Rights is to place limits on the majority's freedom to oppress the minority, and sometimes on the ability of a powerful, although unelected, minority to oppress the majority. I made no "general admonition" that the courts should never interfere with the "discretion [of] the states and their people." I have no quarrel at all with such cases as *Brown* v. *Board of Education, Gideon* v. *Wainwright,* and *Escobedo* v. *Illinois.* In the very unlikely event that the people of Washington or its legislature had really ordained, by referendum or statute, discrimination on the basis of race, I would have thought it proper for the Court to have invoked the Fourteenth Amendment to strike down the enactment. But any such referendum or legislation or other decision by the people of Washington or their elected representatives to prefer certain minorities by establishing racial quotas, while theoretically possible, is practically unimaginable. To say that the faculty of the University of Washington Law School acted as "the agents of the people" is very rarefied theory indeed. That law school, like most law schools, including mine and Professor Cox's, *is* managed in most important respects by its faculty, who are lawyers. (My statement that it is "run by lawyers" was hardly a "gibe.") Those lawyers are not appointed and granted tenure by the governor or legislature of the state, but by their seniors on the faculty. Their subjection to "legislative control and direction" is far more theoretical than real.

But I wish to emphasize that I do not confound Professor Cox with the people who want the courts to use the Constitution as a tool to enact legislation which the voters reject. Of course I agree with those who argued that the use by the functionaries of the Washington Law School of powers in theory delegated to them by the people violated the Constitution. I disagree with Professor Cox only insofar as he believes (if I understand his brief correctly) that the Constitution permits discrimination in favor of some races but not others. *DeFunis* was an example not of judicial use of the Constitution to circumvent the ordinary democratic process, but of the circumvention of that process by a bureaucracy peculiarly remote from "legislative control and direction."

Naturally I agree with the first paragraph of Sidney Schindler's letter, except that I do not object to the reapportionment cases. As a practical matter, malapportioned legislatures would never have reformed themselves, simply because too many of their members benefited personally from the malapportionment. If the sentence he quotes in the second paragraph is really open to the interpretation that I meant to accuse the anti-capital-punishment, pro-abortion, or pro-busing lawyers of "violation of law," I apologize. I had no such intent. Indeed, in my review of Michael Meltsner's *Cruel and Unusual: The Supreme Court and Capital Punishment* in the February COMMENTARY I went out of my way to describe him and his fellow opponents of capital punishment as "very gifted, learned, and ethical." I meant only to point out that the distrust of the democratic process is shared by two otherwise very different groups of lawyers.

Finally I can only express agreement with Herman A. Gray's point that there is little historical support for the proposition that the courts are better fitted than the other two branches to decide what is best for the country.

Weizmann

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

David Vital, reviewing Isaiah Friedman's *The Question of Palestine 1914-1918* [Books in Review, June], salutes the author justly for his "meticulous" work on the official papers, now open, dealing with the origin of the Balfour Declaration, but goes on to draw some conclusions that run counter, in fact, to the documentation in the book. Specifically, he sees the book as revealing the "sinister" nature of British motivation at the time and the irrelevance of Weizmann's diplomacy, whereas Friedman, al-

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lowing us to see the full range and complexity of everyone's motivations, leaves us at the end with the recognition that Britain's decision to come out with a Declaration in 1917 was momentous and positive for the future, and that Weïzmann's role in this was decisive.

On Britain's motivation, Friedman's main achievement is to show that in this—perhaps unique—case, a government found it possible and desirable to marry two absolutely disparate concepts, one of sentiment and one of strategy, neither of which by itself could have formed a basis for policy. That the British leaders (or most of them) were fascinated by the idea of doing something entirely new and generous for the Jews in opening up a return to Zion, emerges with the utmost clarity from the endless comments and reports in official papers that Friedman draws on so effectively. That they also saw this as a way to reinforce what they judged to be their strategic needs in the Middle East is also spelled out convincingly. And here Friedman establishes the point that the potential rival they had constantly in mind was not France (as Mr. Vital seems to think) but Germany. Long-term strategy had to be seen, Friedman says, "within the context of the global German-British confrontation." At that stage in the war, an Allied victory could not be taken for granted. There could have been a German-Turkish declaration of sympathy for Jewish autonomy in Palestine. If there were a stalemate peace, Germany would be sitting pretty for the development of her Eastern policies, in line with a Turkish-supported Pan-Islamism. The Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916 had been the first attempt to counter this, in *alliance*, not rivalry, with the French. As Sykes (after he had become a fervid Zionist) wrote in August 1917 in a secret memorandum quoted by Friedman: "I want to see a permanent Anglo-French Entente, allied to the Jews, Arabs, and Armenians which will render Pan-Islamism innocuous and protect India and Africa from the Turco-German combine."

By this time, a British-oriented Zionism was being seen as the key to operations. There has never been the slightest attempt to conceal the *quid pro quo* that Lloyd George always had in mind. "Annexation" was ruled out by the spirit of the times; but for the British to "view with favor the es-

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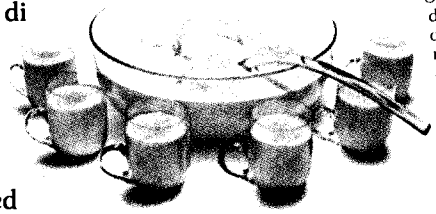

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tablishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine" was something that would rally Jewish sentiment to the Allies, as indeed it did. With the Declaration published, history took its course. The British later could be timid, cold-blooded, and even treacherous, but "the Home" was there. As Friedman writes: "After November 1917, Jewry was never the same again. . . . The Zionists had won a tremendous victory. . . . Weizmann and Sokolow rocketed to fame. . . . But the greatest gain was the recognition of the collective Jewish right to Palestine."

The Declaration not only gave the Jewish home "a legal foundation," it formulated a British moral pledge that continued to mean something, despite its erosion, in terms of a chance for upbuilding. Even Curzon, who had opposed the Declaration, is shown arguing in a Cabinet paper a month later that whatever happened now, the Turks had to be kept out since otherwise it would destroy "the remotest chance of fulfillment" of Jewish aspirations. As sympathy for Zionist aims began to be corroded by pro-Arab temporizing, the original pledge was a countervailing force to be appealed to desperately, and not always unsuccessfully, until Bevinism took over completely.

Ironically, the genuineness of pro-Zionist sentiment, as documented repeatedly in Friedman, has apparently led Mr. Vital into his other basic error—that it would all have happened without Weizmann. As he puts it: "Once the British government had been made aware of Zionism . . . the machine ground on unaided in its cumbersome way with astonishingly little help."

The word "unaided" is really extraordinary. Throughout Friedman's book one is made aware of the brilliant and tireless stimulus from Weizmann. Merely to indicate the mood of this, one might quote Friedman on an admittedly extreme example—that when the Declaration was hanging fire, "a conversation with Weizmann of two or three minutes sufficed for Lloyd George to instruct his secretary to put 'Palestine' on the agenda of the next War Cabinet meeting." But this was merely the tip of the iceberg. For some idea of the range and subtlety of his efforts, one can read the Weizmann letters, now being published. Sir Charles Webster, who described the Declaration as "the greatest act of diplomatic statesmanship of the First World War," saw the Zionist claim, and achievement, as unprecedented, with Weizmann as the central figure. In Friedman's summary of Webster's analysis,

> it was Weizmann who was largely responsible for bringing British statesmen, public men, and officials to look favourably on Zionism. Of unbounded energy, singleness of purpose and determination, he possessed great driving power and personal magnetism. His enthusiasm was infectious, but his success sprang from his lucidity of exposition and his ability to put his message across.

So much for Mr. Vital's assertion that any idea of a "triumph" by Weizmann must now be abandoned.

As Friedman points out, the true originality of the Declaration was its reference specifically to "the Jewish people," which then became "an entity recognized by international law." To forget this, and Weizmann's role in achieving it, is to lose contact with history.

CHAIM RAPHAEL
Hove, England

DAVID VITAL writes:

It is interesting that the question of how much weight attaches to Weizmann's diplomacy should still generate heat. No doubt we shall have a great deal more of this kind of thing as Zionist historiography moves into higher gear. First World War diplomacy is notoriously open to varying interpretations. But, of course, I didn't say that Weizmann's diplomacy was "irrelevant." I only said that the old myths about Weizmann as the *virtually singlehanded* begetter of the Declaration will duly vanish. There is also a difference between saying that the carefully ambiguous *language* of the Declaration now appears "sinister"—i.e., portending misfortune or disaster, as the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary puts the sense in which I was (and I think plainly) using the term—as opposed to saying that British *motivation* (policy?) was sinister, which would have been a silly thing to say and I am glad I didn't say it. As for the Germans and the French and so on: British concern about the French in the Levant in this particular context became severe *after* Sykes-Picot. Certainly, the British worried about the Germans, but the Balfour Declaration was not truly significant in that context: there could *not* have been a German-Turkish declaration of sympathy, for Turkish policy was unalterably opposed to Zionism and the Germans, while they might have played with the idea from time to time, knew this and had, indeed, known it for twenty years. Certainly, the sympathy of several British statesmen counted for something, probably for a great deal. But it was political and strategic calculation that permitted them to indulge their sentiments. In any event, the Bevinism that Mr. Raphael speaks of was there too, virtually from the start. Generally, the fight to keep the British on the side of the Jews was a losing fight. Some Zionists understood this, some did not. All joined in the fight, however, with the result that the retreat from 1917 to 1947 was long and hard, and much (but not enough) was accomplished in the meantime. Whether Weizmann, the compleat Anglophile, contributed more than he caused to be lost by his sticking philosophically as well as tactically to the spirit of 1917 will long be debated. It is an interesting and serious debate and cannot be settled by quoting authority, be it Sir Charles Webster or anyone else.

American Innocence

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I found Lev Navrozov's article, "Notes on American Innocence" [August], disappointing and, ultimately, infuriating. Here is a sophisticated, cultured man flaunting his reactionary views and ridiculing liberals (who in his descriptions emerge almost invariably as humorless fanatics) for their astonishing naiveté. What Mr. Navrozov is saying to Americans is this: You have it so much better than the rest of the world, what are you complaining about? . . .

When I came to this country as a Hungarian refugee in 1956, people expected me to rave about America and everything American. And I did—first out of conviction, then out of habit. I was always afraid (and I suppose, in a way, I still am) of the ultimate chauvinist taunt: "If you don't like it here, go back where you came from!" Yet I also learned that even naturalized citizens have the right to be critical of their adopted country. Mr. Navrozov implies that if we saw America's ills from a relativist

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perspective, we would realize just how good we have it. But I, for one, am not comforted by the knowledge that, say, the Watergate affair is child's play compared to the Kremlin's horror stories. . . .

The author is amused and often moved by all those "innocent Americans." But who are these charmingly childlike people? Where, in what woods, can these babes be found? The Age of Innocence, if there ever was one, has long been over. And come to think of it, Mr. Navrozov may not even be very sorry to hear that, since he also warns us about the dangers of American naiveté, especially political naiveté. I imagine he is relieved to know that we have recently had a President who is anything but an innocent.

IVAN SANDERS
Suffolk Community College
Selden, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . I am not in a position to dispute any of Lev Navrozov's figures on, say, the prevalence of crime or the price of meat in the Soviet Union—since all such information available in this country comes from biased sources, whether pro- or anti-Soviet. However, his picture of this country seems like that of a person who once spent a weekend here—not like that of one who has lived here for two years. Now, when even our chief decision-makers have not been elected by the people, Mr. Navrozov's characterization of our "democracy" is touching in its innocence.

Or is it innocence? One could write an article longer than Mr. Navrozov's criticizing his distortions and omissions, the highly emotive words he uses. . . . Or the fact that Mr. Navrozov never mentions the CIA. But perhaps the grossest example is his attitude toward the Vietnam war. In this context it must be noted that there has been no evidence, nor even any accusation, that the North Vietnamese have tortured anyone other than U.S. pilots they . . . captured in the act of . . . bombing targets, including North Vietnamese schools and hospitals—whereas there is ample evidence from international observers that the South Vietnamese democracy has tortured thousands of its own civilians in such devices as the "tiger cages" of Con Son. Further, nowhere in his article does Mr. Navrozov cite anything in the USSR to compare with such atrocities (or the ones committed by the U.S. forces in places like My Lai and Ben Tre . . .) which would substantiate his claim that the "average Soviet reader . . . would be impressed with the civic progress of South Vietnam as compared with his own regime."

Of course it is true that some democratic rights exist in the U.S. today, that our country hardly compares with Chile, Spain, the Union of South Africa, *et al.* But it is strange that Mr. Navrozov does not use these countries as a yardstick against which to measure the U.S. Could this be because our democracy-defending government supports and maintains these regimes?

MILLEA KENIN
Palo Alto, California

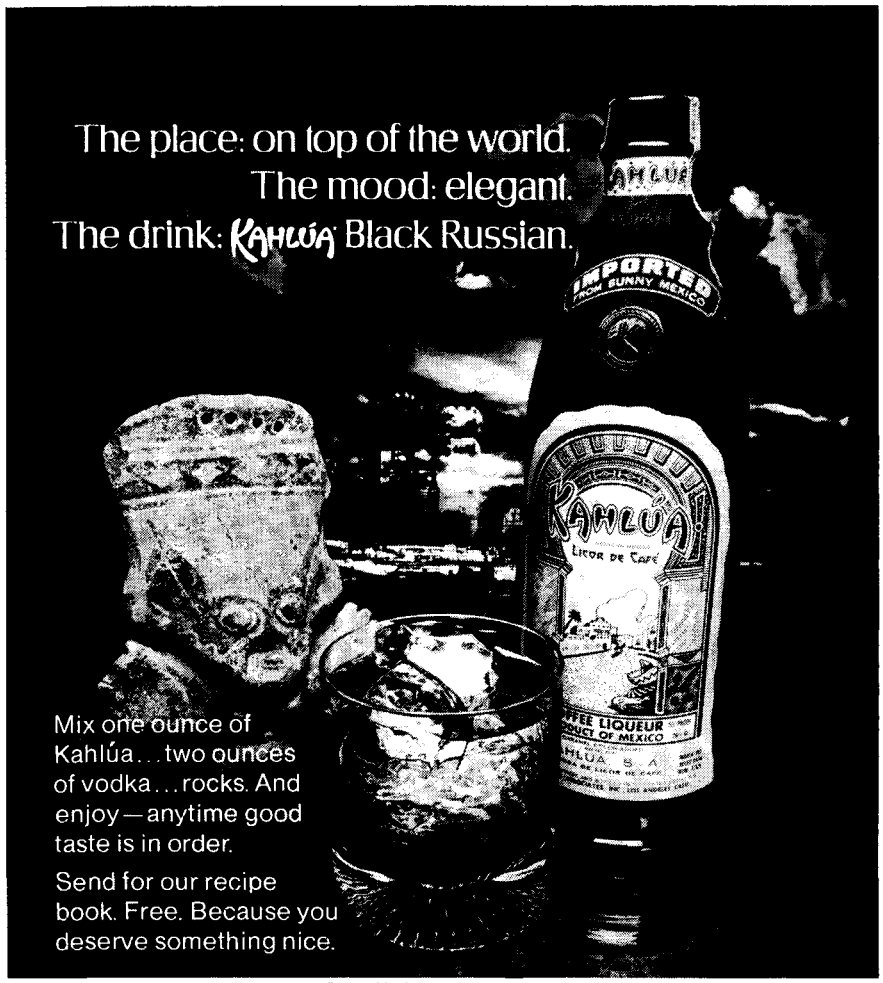
TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Lev Navrozov has movingly described the feelings of disbelief and helplessness experienced by those of us who have come from the "other side" when we are confronted by the all-knowing, slightly contemptuous, and always-so-confident "experts" on life and progress behind the Iron Curtain. . . . It took me many years to understand why Americans will not, cannot, know the truth. Not even after Solzhenitsyn. . . . So it is with great emotion and deep gratitude that I read Mr. Navrozov's comments on his own thoughts and feelings in dealing with this aspect of his new life.

ELLA JACIN
Norwalk, Connecticut

LEV NAVROZOV writes:

The fact that Ivan Sanders speaks of my "reactionary views" indicates that he and I have one concept in common: the belief that some social realities are reactionary, while others are progressive. But I wonder if our frame of reference as to what is progressive also coincides. In my frame of reference, the social system of China of the 3rd century B.C.E. would be reactionary in the 20th century, as are its analogues established by Lenin, Stalin, Hitler, Mao, Castro, Rakosi, and others. On the other hand, the social fabric of the United States is not only highly progressive, but indeed revolutionary, though of course there is room for further progress,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and it is not as easy as many seem to think to achieve progress (not to mention revolutionary advances) in social knowledge and practice. Some Americans, however, believe that, say, Castro (or Stalin, or Trotsky, or Mao) is a revolutionary simply because he calls himself one.

The foregoing, I believe, dispenses with much of what Mr. Sanders is saying. I never "ridiculed liberals," and the word "liberal" did not appear in the article. Mr. Sanders himself has decided that the people I characterized as childlike or childish in their attitude toward closed societies must be "liberals." Vague, ambivalent, or deceptive as the word "liberal" often is, it is not usually associated with Richard Nixon and J. William Fulbright at one and the same time, and yet these two men have contributed heavily to a foreign policy which is childish, ignorant, and fatal.

Another incorrect inference of Mr. Sanders is that I was saying to Americans: "You have it so much better than the rest of the world, what are you complaining about?" My point was simply that Americans must know about the war-civilizations which are so different from their own society.

Millea Kenin says that she is not in a position to know anything about crime or the price of meat in post-1917 Russia because all such information "comes from biased sources, whether pro- or anti-Soviet." True, since the early 30's the owners of Russia have not taken the trouble even to invent crime statistics; they simply declare that there has been no crime. A reasonable person might conclude from this not that Russia has had no crime for forty years but that it is a closed society which does not permit any truths about itself to be published either at home or abroad. As for the price of meat, Miss Kenin could easily learn this—at least what it is in Moscow's state stores—as well as the salary of a Russian doctor or lawyer. Her unwillingness to know even what can be known is characteristic of the attitude of many Western journalists, scholars, and intellectuals who prefer to conclude that the regimes of Russia, China, or North Vietnam cannot be too bad since no "bad" statistics are available for them.

Miss Kenin notes that my "characterization" of American democracy is "touching in its innocence." But I tried to explain that the "average civic index" seems to be higher for the U.S. today than for, say, Russia in the summer of 1917. The index as such has nothing to do with the specific constitutional problems Miss Kenin raises.

Miss Kenin notes that there is no hard evidence that the North Vietnamese tortured anyone other than U.S. pilots. True, just as there was no hard evidence that there had been torture in Russia after 1917 until Khrushchev's speech "exposing" Stalin in 1956. How can we estimate the prevalence of torture in societies in which even common crime statistics are kept secret?

On the other hand, a Soviet reader of the New York *Times* would, in fact, be impressed with the civic progress of South Vietnam. Hundreds of actions the *Times* describes, from the independent behavior of opposition in the Senate of South Vietnam to marches, rallies, protests, etc. are unimaginable in Russia. Indeed, the claim on the part of some Americans that they know more of the "truth" about Vietnam because they know about the "tiger cages" resembles nothing so much as the claim of Soviet propaganda that there are no civil rights or freedoms in the U.S. because of the existence of Sing Sing and other "torture chambers." As for My Lai, it and similar incidents show only that, inevitably, crimes, accidents, sudden mental aberrations, etc. occur in any army or in any other large group of people.

Miss Kenin suggests that I did not mention Chile, Spain, and the Union of South Africa because the "democracy-defending government [of the U.S.] supports and maintains these regimes." But the U.S. government supports and maintains the war machine of Russia as well, and in fact is helping to raise its war potential. I referred to Russia, North Vietnam, China, and Nazi Germany rather than Spain, Chile, *et al.*, because these former societies represent an extreme case of dangerous, closed, expanding war machines.

Finally I wish to thank Ella Jacin for her response. I feel that she speaks for those who have lived inside closed societies but never stopped thinking, either when they lived inside or after they escaped to democracy.

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Ethnicity

To the Editor of Commentary:

In "Ethnicity and the Schools" [September] Nathan Glazer notes that the new ethnicity is to be taken seriously in regard to education, and concludes that racism is an inadequate explanation for the features of contemporary ethnic feeling. But even so, he still manages to use the words "racism" or "racist" at least ten times in five pages, and makes additional references to "anti-black prejudice" and to "anti-black backlash." It is disheartening that at this late date even a comparatively sympathetic social scientist finds that an analysis of white ethnic feeling must begin by distinguishing it from bigotry.

Mr. Glazer seems to think that even an educated audience is ignorant of such data as the . . . 1969 Gallup poll and the 1970 Harris survey. The Harris study for the Urban League revealed that native Anglo-Saxon Protestants are more likely to be anti-black than are Irish-, Italian-, or Polish-Americans. A March 1969 Gallup poll reported that while only 67 per cent of Americans would vote for a Negro for President, 78 per cent of Catholics would so vote. . . . Perhaps Mr. Glazer's approach might more profitably have begun with the query: When will the rest of America finally become as open-minded as the ethnics?

White ethnic thinking about education, especially higher education, is not a petty side issue for conscientious scholars; demands that white ethnics should not be frozen in an inferior position and ignored are justified. Survey data published by Cornell's Marshall W. Meyer disclosed that the percentage of students at Mr. Glazer's own Harvard whose father's religion was Catholic actually fell between 1969 and 1972.

The respected critic of American society, Peter F. Drucker, calls attention to the hard fact that at least as early as 1970 the relative proportion of young blacks enrolled in college already considerably exceeded the relative proportion of young Italian-Americans and Polish-Americans enrolled. There was even a black president of a major U.S. university (Wharton at Michigan State) before there was the first—and only—such Catholic (McGill at Columbia). If campus pressure on their own behalf from blacks is legitimate, so too is that from Italian- or Polish-Americans. . . .

George Steven Swan
Columbus, Ohio

To the Editor of Commentary:

I was somewhat surprised and dismayed to read that Nathan Glazer, the co-author of the distinguished work a decade ago which perceptively rejected the melting pot as describing social process, now apparently fears the undoing of that symbol. As a historian and an organizer of an ethnic-studies curriculum, I believe that Mr. Glazer has exaggerated the dangers of the current ethnic movement and may have mistaken the support that ethnic studies curricula are receiving. . . .

Mr. Glazer, I fear, errs in believing that certain articulate promoters, Michael Novak, Geno Baroni, and others, are group representatives. He may have forgotten that the white nationalities have had their own ethnic leaders, particularly those of group institutions, for a long time. The novel feature of the "new" ethnicity is the involvement of articulate publicists who have only lately become aware of their ethnic identity. Ethnic feeling has had much historical continuity among many groups; it is really quite old. For example, the two major Polish fraternal organizations, the Polish National Alliance and the Polish Roman Catholic Union, have been conducting their affairs for nearly a century with a substantial, though now static, membership. Of course, these and scores of other ethnic fraternal and voluntary associations have provided the superstructure of ethnicity for all that time and more. Thus, this kind of ethnic identification long antedates King's march into Cicero and Groppi's assault on Milwaukee's South Side; it did not arise as a response to these events. This older, more substantial ethnic interest does not seek recognition of its "equal significance," as Mr. Glazer suggests the "new" ethnics do, but a correction of the established view that its past has been of little or no significance. As a historian of Slavic America (although not Slavic myself), I feel that that demand is fully justified, in fact essential for an understanding of our national experience.

A second comment of Mr. Glazer about Americanization disturbs me even more, in part because of its inaccuracy. He says that "'Americanization' . . . was a great achievement . . . despite its harshness and arrogance." If he is referring to the campaign before and during World War I, the standard historical work on the movement, Edward Hartmann's *The Movement to Americanize the Immigrant* (1948), asserts that it was clearly unsuccessful. In fact, it made many groups more defensively ethnic. I can testify to its failure in the case of Slavic-Americans. However, on a more subtle level, "Americanization" has taken place and will continue to be effective, but in a manner which Mr. Glazer criticizes as divisive, not assimilative.

I see no danger and in fact considerable value in our learning about the pluralistic nature of our nation's founding. Mr. Glazer is concerned that the apparently excessive enthusiasm for ethnic studies will make a number of ethnic heroes in the Revolution as important as Washington, Adams, and Jefferson, thus distorting our history. . . . But, for example, I think it valuable for Polish- and non-Polish-Americans alike to realize that Kosciuszko, Washington's aide-de-camp, fought for the same philosophical principles as his military superior. From my knowledge, this ability to be "ethnic" *and* "American" is what ethnic leaders wish to convey to all.

Victor Greene
University of Wisconsin
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

To the Editor of Commentary:

I would like to add two points to Nathan Glazer's fine article.

Presumably Mr. Glazer and I agree on a program that would look something like the following: appropriate reference to various minority groups in the proper context and proportion in grammar-school history courses; some electives available in high school and college; and perhaps advanced specialization available in some, though surely not all, graduate schools.

I would merely like to add that the quantity of courses available might appropriately be in very rough proportion to the sheer size of an ethnic group in a given area of the country. I suggest this in part because the culture and the heritage of the group could be available to members of the group, but in greater part because the rest of the community should have available the resources necessary

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to understand the culture and heritage of major components of the population. For the City University of New York, for example, not to have a major program in Italian studies is even more unfair to the non-Italians than it is to the Italians.

Second, Mr. Glazer is quite right that none of the ethnic groups is as large as the black community. But there is another minority group in American society, of very substantial size, which also has been the victim of oppression and discrimination, though obviously not as severe as what the blacks have had to endure: the one-quarter of the American population that is Catholic.

Again, my concern is more with the rest of society than it is with the Catholic component. Non-Catholic Americans, elite as well as non-elite, know very little about the Catholic heritage, experience, and culture. The elites seem quite content to settle for the interpretations provided in the New York *Times* and the *New York Review of Books* by such observers as Wilfrid Sheed and Garry Wills, observers who offer the consoling information that Catholicism is on the wane. It isn't.

I am less concerned with fairness—though that is not unimportant—than I am concerned with the harmful effect of ignorance—and it is more harmful in high places than in low.

ANDREW M. GREELEY
Center for the Study of
American Pluralism
University of Chicago
Chicago, Illinois

NATHAN GLAZER writes:

The questions I raised in a very brief article deserve more discussion than they could receive there, or in this correspondence: not every topic was raised and not every base covered. Thus, I did not in any way suggest that Americans of non-Anglo-Saxon background are *more* prejudiced than those of Anglo-Saxon background: I accept the general import of the surveys George Steven Swan refers to, and my concern was to defend the groups of East European and Southern European origin from the charge of pure and simple racism, rather than to support this charge. The thoughtful letters of Victor Greene and Andrew M. Greeley underscore the problem to which I was pointing: how are we to handle ethnic studies in the school curriculum? I think we all share the same objectives: respect for and knowledge of one's own background, and a sound knowledge of the way different groups have been related to the development of American society. Nor do any of us have a simple solution to the dangers of Balkanization of the curriculum. One point does deserve comment: the American immigrant was "Americanized," in the sense that a basic cultural pattern (most impressively, a new language) and a common loyalty were successfully imposed. Perhaps this could only have been by the subtle and diffuse influences of American culture: I agree that these influences were crucial in Americanizing the immigrant. But I think certain specific *decisions*—e.g., to conduct the public schools only in English—must also have played an important role. I was concerned to argue that one influence on such decisions must be to maintain the unity of the American polity.

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Culture and the Present Moment

A Round-Table Discussion

Edward Grossman *Hilton Kramer* *Michael Novak*
Cynthia Ozick *Norman Podhoretz* *Jack Richardson*
Lionel Trilling

Last September, COMMENTARY, *in conjunction with the Humanities Program of the Rockefeller Foundation, held an all-day symposium on the state of high culture in America at the present time. What follows is an edited transcript of the discussion, which was entirely spontaneous.*

EDWARD GROSSMAN *has written widely on literary and social topics.*

HILTON KRAMER *is Art Critic of the New York* Times *and the author of* The Age of the Avant-Garde.

MICHAEL NOVAK, *author of* The Rise of the Unmeltable Ethnics *and* Choosing Our King, *was until recently associate director of the Humanities Program of the Rockefeller Foundation.*

CYNTHIA OZICK, *a novelist and literary critic, is the author of* Trust *and* The Pagan Rabbi and Other Stories.

NORMAN PODHORETZ *is the editor of* COMMENTARY *and the author of* Making It *and* Doings and Undoings.

JACK RICHARDSON *is a playwright and* COMMENTARY*'s regular theater critic.*

LIONEL TRILLING *is University Professor at Columbia and the author of* The Liberal Imagination, Beyond Culture, Sincerity and Authenticity, *and many other works.*

Norman Podhoretz: As little, or as much, as thirty-five years ago, a consensus existed within the intellectual community of this country—certainly within that segment of the intellectual community that associated itself with the avant-garde—as to what high culture was and what it was not, what the relations were between high culture and low culture, and what the relations were between culture generally and modern society. In rereading Clement Greenberg's famous article, "Avant-Garde and Kitsch," which appeared exactly thirty-five years ago in *Partisan Review,* I was struck by just this quality of self-assurance on the part of the author as he mapped out this extremely problematic territory. Greenberg's definiteness was more than merely personal or idiosyncratic, I believe; it reflected a consensus of artistic and intellectual opinion.

The first principle in that consensus of opinion had to do with the definition of high culture. Every member of the intellectual community of the time was fairly—not fairly, absolutely—certain he knew what high culture was: it was the avant-garde. And the avant-garde was that tradition in the arts—by 1939 one could speak of the avant-garde as a tradition—that had broken with the formal conventions of the 19th century, primary among them the convention of realism. The avant-garde was a movement that sought a new language, new vocabulary, new syntax, new rhythms, as a way of overcoming what was felt to be the desiccation and obsolescence of the older forms. The works that were produced out of this new impulse were, as a consequence of the break with realism, necessarily obscure, not easily accessible to the common reader, or viewer, or listener, and, indeed, sometimes not to the specialist either; and this difficulty, this obscurity, brought avant-garde art immediately into conflict with society. First, with society defined as a public for the arts, a public that was now put into a condition of bafflement and rage by the difficulties avant-garde works posed. But secondly, in a larger, political, sense, the modernist movement came into conflict with society as a result of its having taken a prominent place among the forces which were in rebellion against the major tendencies and directions of modern life.

The rise to dominance of the middle classes, the development of industrial activity as the key to the economic organization of society, the spread of democracy and the enfranchisement, both po-

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litical and eventually cultural, of masses of people who had become, at least in a formal or minimal sense, literate—the modernist tradition defined itself as being in opposition to any or all these tendencies of modern society. Its opposition was both implicit and explicit. In *Axel's Castle,* Edmund Wilson claims an implicit alliance between the Symbolist movement in literature and the revolution against bourgeois society. Among the particular writers Wilson discusses were several who were not themselves revolutionaries, but in their own terms, as artists, they were in Wilson's view mounting an assault on bourgeois civilization comparable to that of Marx and the Russian revolution. The Symbolist attack on the structure of sensibility of bourgeois civilization, in other words, was, for Wilson, a politically significant act.

But in addition to such an implicit association of modernism with the assault on bourgeois, or modern, or democratic, or mass, or industrial society, the well-known truth is that a great many artists were themselves political radicals of one stripe or another. Today it is often assumed that they were all radicals of the Left, but in point of fact a great many were radicals of the Right—Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, Wyndham Lewis, and so forth. What the Left and the Right shared was a repudiation of the basic arrangements of the society in which modern men lived. The objection to this society was based in the one case on a literally reactionary position, that is, a celebration of the values of the past over those of the present, and in the other case on a revolutionary or utopian position, celebrating the virtues of some putative future civilization—Communist (as with Aragon, and the early Dos Passos), anarchist, or vaguely socialist.

In any event, the opposition between high culture, or the avant-garde, and contemporary society was clearly defined by the end of the 1930's, and operated in two spheres, the sphere of what we may call domestic relations and the sphere of what we may call foreign relations. In its domestic relations, high culture took an intransigently antagonistic position to mass culture. As Clement Greenberg makes clear in his discussion of the notion of kitsch, there could be no real connection between high culture and mass culture; the two were enemies, irreconcilable enemies. High culture, moreover, was constantly being threatened by mass culture, which in its effort to accommodate itself to high culture was likely to produce a bastardized hybrid, later to be known as middlebrow culture or midcult. No true resolution of this war could be foreseen, except, Greenberg suggests, under socialism, and he does not pretend to believe that the coming of socialism is an imminent event.

In its external, or foreign relations, high culture stood in an equally intransigent position—an "adversary" position, to cite Lionel Trilling's famous characterization—to modern, bourgeois society. No accommodation was possible between these two camps either, for they were pursuing different aims and they represented different sets of values. If I may smuggle in a vocabulary both parties to this war would have found abhorrent, one camp, the camp of the avant-garde, inhabited the City of God, while the other, the camp of modern bourgeois democratic industrial society, inhabited the City of Man. The inhabitants of the City of God, furthermore, had not the slightest intention of heeding the advice of St. Augustine and establishing a church within the City of Man. On the contrary, they would remain perennially vigilant against the encroachments of the enemy, isolated within their own community, pursuing their own objectives, making their own standards, and in effect worshipping God in purity and selflessness, without hope of worldly reward.

Probably no greater contrast could be imagined than the one between the situation I have just described and the situation we find ourselves in today. Today I doubt that anyone knows with assurance or could say with confidence what high culture is. Hilton Kramer, in an essay entitled "The Age of the Avant-Garde," published in the October 1972 COMMENTARY, explores with particular brilliance the curious twists in the career of the avant-garde in the thirty-five-year period since Greenberg wrote. As Kramer shows, an almost complete reversal of roles has occurred. We see in our day the institutionalization of the avant-garde in museums, universities, foundations, even government agencies. Far from encountering opposition or hostility, the avant-garde finds itself subsidized, both by a public which is willing to pay a great deal of money—very often to hear itself, or see itself, abused—and by major institutions of the society at large.

A symptom of this reversal of roles, if we needed any other, was a recent piece in the New York *Times* Sunday arts section, by Robert Brustein, dean of the Yale Drama School. Brustein complains in this piece of the impending starvation of the performing arts: he asserts that the only hope is for society to assume a *responsibility* for the arts and subsidize them—to the tune of at least a hundredth of the national defense budget, that is, about a billion dollars per year. We've come a long way here from Clement Greenberg and his notion of an implacable war between high culture and mass society. The truth is, of course, that far from suffering from starvation, the arts have been receiving—through the National Endowment and through the great foundations—an unprecedented amount of money lately, and what is most interesting and perhaps surprising about this development is that so much of the money has been flowing to avant-garde, or at least experimental, work. Under the Kennedy

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administration, an administration which might have been thought to be particularly sympathetic to the arts, the federal government spent not a single penny in this area. Today the figure is around $80 million, going up to a hundred. And that's just for the arts; the humanities have a separate budget.

What all this means is that the isolation and loneliness, the minority position which was once thought to be of the very essence of the avant-garde, has now been simply reversed. As Hilton Kramer remarks in his essay, the avant-garde is the only academy, the only establishment, we have.

An additional source of confusion has been the massification of the *attitudes* of the avant-garde. If the avant-garde once represented a lonely monastic order in the City of God, today that monastic order has expanded to huge proportions through the growth of the universities and other factors, and there is now something like a mass public for innovation in the arts, as well as unheard of numbers of people identifying themselves with the values and attitudes traditionally associated with the avant-garde, especially its hostility to what used to be called the bourgeoisie, and is today usually called the middle class, and all its works.

Then there is the emergence of the "new sensibility" of the 1960's. This so-called new sensibility, itself a product of the traditions of avant-garde thinking, made a deliberate effort to erase the distinctions between high culture and mass, or low, culture, through such movements as Pop Art and through the critical celebration of popular figures like the Beatles or previously despised Hollywood movie directors like Howard Hawks.

The old clarity with regard to the internal domestic relations of the culture, the notion of an intransigent war between high culture and low, has altogether faded away, then, just as an erosion has taken place in the parallel conception of an adversary relation between the avant-garde and society as a whole. The amazing thing is that despite this enormous change the old pieties and mythologies continue to hold sway, and large numbers of people continue to speak as if the old intransigent attitudes were necessary and pertinent even to the current situation. Nevertheless, an honest look at today's circumstances would have to acknowledge the presence of great confusion on these fundamental issues. The consequences of the confusion, it seems to me, have been most strikingly felt not in the arts themselves, which for the most part proceed as they proceed, but among the audience and in the realm of criticism. There is no longer a consensus as to what is good, what is bad, what is important, what is minor, what is significant, what is trivial, and how one tells the difference. Art can live in the absence of such a clear, critical consensus—at least great art can live in the absence of such a clear, critical consensus—but for minor works, and for the culture as a whole, the general atmosphere and the soil out of which new great works eventually emerge, such confusion is surely damaging and dangerous. What I hope we can do in this discussion is contribute something to the development of a new clarity on these matters.

Hilton Kramer: For me, rereading "Avant-garde and Kitsch" for I suppose the twentieth time, and also rereading Ortega y Gasset's *The Revolt of the Masses,* which I regard as a classic text on this question, what is especially striking is not so much the reasoned defense of high culture as the fact that the concept of kitsch, or lowbrow culture, remains thoroughly unexamined by these authors. It is simply assumed by Oretga and by Greenberg that kitsch or lowbrow culture is both monolithic and easily identifiable. What is more, lowbrow culture is assumed to be something a healthy culture might do without and *should* do without, for its own good.

This does not conform to my sense of the cultural realities. First of all, a vast cultural terrain exists below the mountain peaks of high culture, and in that terrain there are many levels and many kinds of accomplishment, many contending values; for me, indeed, these constitute the most interesting part of the entire problem. Secondly, the relationship between avant-garde and kitsch is no longer one of civil war, if it ever was. Ortega speaks in one place of the way in which "the mass crushes beneath it everything that is different, everything that is excellent, individual, qualified, and serious." Now, I ask myself in what sense "the mass" could be said to have "crushed" *Ulysses,* or *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon,* in 1930—the year Ortega's book was published—or in what sense "the mass" in previous centuries could be said to have crushed Rembrandt, or Shakespeare. The answer is, in no sense that I can identify or isolate.

A year before Ortega published his analysis, the Museum of Modern Art was founded in New York. In my view of modern cultural history, the founders of the Museum of Modern Art had a much shrewder understanding of where "the mass" stood in relation to culture than Ortega did. They understood, for instance, that there was a public, a society, out there that was multi-leveled in its education, in its taste, in its appetites, and that the products of high artistic culture could be made accessible to a variety of levels through institutionalization. The values of high culture, in the view of the founders of the Museum of Modern Art, did not necessarily have to be *fully* experienced in order to be experienced at some level of value. That is to say, the values of high culture were transmissible at many different levels of appreciation and attachment. This, for me, goes

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to the heart of the issue of high culture in a democratic society. Unlike the situation in earlier societies, the fate of high culture in a democratic society is intimately related to the democratization of power. Culture is no longer the monopoly of a particular class, but is shared and debated, and is constantly being renewed through that sharing and that debate.

Lionel Trilling: I'm in accord with you about that. I think one of the things that fails in Greenberg's essay is the sense of history. You spoke of the founding of the Museum of Modern Art in 1929. I happened just yesterday to be looking at the life of John Quinn, and in particular at the facts of the sale of Quinn's collection here in 1927. This superb collection, which could in itself have constituted the basis of the Museum of Modern Art, was let go at insanely low prices. Nobody wanted it. It was said that there was no "public" for it. And yet within a very few years the Museum of Modern Art was founded and people were crowding into its galleries. It turned out there was a public after all, and a very large one.

I agree with you too about the inadequate representation in Greenberg's essay of the notion of "low" culture. I had an interesting experience this summer at the Aspen Institute. At a party given to mark the end of a conference one of the guests sat down at a piano and out of an enormous memory began playing popular songs, untold numbers of them. Some young people began to sing to his playing. They too seemed to know every song that had been written and after a while I was drawn to join them and I discovered that I knew dozens, scores, hundreds of songs from the time of my childhood, from the time of my mother's childhood—that I knew and adored them. It suddenly came to me that I was filled with the most enchanting music from popular culture, and I thought what a splendid thing it was to be in possession of these songs, which certainly do not in any way make against my notion of what high culture is. Indeed, in an important and striking way they are continuous with it.

Podhoretz: Could I ask you to elaborate on that? The assumption reflected in Greenberg's essay is that, far from continuity, there is a radical disjunction between popular art and high art. Popular songs are especially tainted because they are written purely for money, purely for the market, and are therefore somehow not genuine, whereas real art, even if bad, at least is created out of the effort of an individual to say something to someone else, irrespective of financial reward. Would you deny any validity at all to that distinction? It is a very widely held notion, even today, that if something is done for money it is by definition disreputable.

Trilling: The relation between money and art is an enormously complicated one, of course. I am reminded of Schumpeter's terrible observation that there is a clandestine alliance between the avant-garde and the bourgeoisie. Greenberg fails to take account of this connection. He sees the avant-garde as single-minded and innocent.

As for the avant-garde's own view of itself, and especially what you refer to as the effort of an individual to say something to someone else, it seems to me that one of the characteristics of the avant-garde, as we experienced it in the 30's, was its continuation of the artistic effort of the 19th century. The avant-garde had a profound will to impose itself morally. It wanted to change people's sensibility, to change people's view of life. I think this can no longer be said. At the present time there is implicit in the conception of the avant-garde a certain tendency to say that we are not finally serious in the old way. Irony has come in, a devaluation of clear moralizing intention, and with it that diminution of distinction between high art and low art which we are so conscious of at the moment.

Cynthia Ozick: Is it irony or parody, parody without irony? Parody seems to be the loophole, the solution, for all these difficulties with high and low art. If as an artist you don't know what to do with the remnants of high culture, you parody them; if you don't know what to do with kitsch, you simply invite it in, adding further to the parody. Take, for instance, a work like Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow*, or the stories of Donald Barthelme. Twenty years hence, every such fiction is going to require an addendum—complete citations of the work and tone and attitude it parodies. What seems implicit now, because of its currency as memory or tradition, will have to be made explicit later, for the sake of comprehension, when tradition is forgotten and memory is dead. And meanwhile, the trouble with parody is that it is endlessly reflective, one parody building on a previous parody, and so on, until eventually the point becomes ingenuity in the permutations of derivativeness, and you lose sight of any original objective notion of what literature can be about, of the real sources of literature.

Trilling: Yes. I think that what is implicit in this parody, or irony, is really a rejection of the vestigial religious intention of art. It would be interesting to consider the relation of the great artists of the avant-garde to their religious backgrounds. Joyce, Lawrence, Eliot, Gide—all are somehow involved either with Catholicism or Protestantism; most of them rejected religion but also they affirmed it.

This situation no longer prevails. A hiatus has occurred in religious instruction, and it is no longer a significant act for a young man to say, I'm

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giving up the religion of my fathers. This is largely what is being mocked or parodied today, all those notions that consort with religion—the notions of salvation, of the shaping of a life which can be approved, and so on. At any rate this is true in literature, and I believe a similar case could be made for its being true in the visual arts.

Edward Grossman: Cynthia Ozick uses the words "remnants of avant-garde culture." That is depressing, but also instructive—it explains something. One would have thought it was the identifiable, somehow coherent, *materials* of past art, rather than the shards or leftovers, that an artist has to begin by working through if he can. This is a theme in Hilton Kramer's "The Age of the Avant-Garde," that process by which a Picasso, to permit myself the obvious example, first of all familiarized himself with what had gone before him in Western, and also in his case later in non-Western, art. His own contribution then took the form partly of a parody, but it was parody intended, and executed, with lusty seriousness. Much of parody in books today, by contrast, is sickly under its lively mask, and it is disrespectful among other things to the artist's own intention and sense of himself. The past, what he knows of it, is a mess; but so is he a mess, and his work too. It is almost as if an announcement were being made that the enterprise is no longer really worth the trouble.

Kramer: One way of putting it might be that the element of parody today has something facetious about it. The parodic impulse was certainly at work in *Ulysses* and in other great works of high culture in the 20's, but it was as you say serious in its intentions. The facetiousness we see today with regard to the artistic enterprise itself has as its unacknowledged function the warding off of any kind of moral commitment.

Podhoretz: Does that kind of facetiousness derive from Dada?

Kramer: Dada was the phenomenon that released its most explicit energies. This new facetiousness is a kind of institutionalization of Dada.

Podhoretz: I would suggest myself that the religious element still exists today but in a highly debased form. It is hard to think of a single serious novel or film of the past few years that does not in some sense invite the reader to join with the author in a celebration of their mutual superiority to everyone else in the world. This affirmation of virtue, of membership in an elect, by means of invidious comparison with everyone else, is a vulgarization and debasement of the original priestly element in the avant-garde enterprise, and is a development that has its parallels in the history of organized religion itself.

Trilling: Everybody wants to get into that particular act—I mean, is impelled to demonstrate his superiority to everyone else. But one way the sense of superiority gets expressed is through the idea that we really are not worth very much. We know we're better than others but sometimes our betterness consists in our awareness that we aren't very good. This too involves the repudiation of those notions I spoke of as consorting with religion, the Victorian ideals of "nobility," of "making a good life," of "fulfilling an ideal." These used to control literature, both what was expressed in literature and the literary enterprise itself, and they no longer do so.

Podhoretz: Still, the serious culture—again, it's hard to locate it precisely—does frequently assert its sense of superiority in a simple way as well. It is true our superiority consists in knowing we are no good, but in another sense we are superior—so this culture says over and over again—because we are living on the frontiers of human experience, and all our failures and unhappinesses—our divorces, the fact that our children are coming out badly, our alcoholism, our drug addiction, our nihilism—are all really a tribute to us, the necessary wounds we incur in living out there on the frontier, exploring new human possibilities.

Kramer: That is a very exact parody of the old avant-garde ideal—Everyman doing his Rimbaud bit and deranging his senses. I suppose it was inevitable that the old avant-garde scenario of achieving some ideal state of mind would be democratized in this way.

Ozick: I once drew up a list of the burdens every new young fiction writer has to bear, a kind of credo which seems to me horrifically idealistic in that sense. It has nine assertions:

1) That each new crop of mass births must reinvent culture.
2) That models are unthinkable.
3) That each succeeding generation is inherently brighter and more courageous than the one before.
4) That "establishments" are closed.
5) That whatever has won success is by definition stale.
6) That "structurelessness," that is, incoherence, must be understood as a paradox, since incoherence is really coherence.
7) That "innovation" is endlessly possible and endlessly positive, and that the more unprecedented a thing is, the better it is.
8) That "alternative forms" are salvational.
9) That irrational or "psychedelic" states represent artistic newness.

Kramer: That seems to me a perfect list. It represents the established ideal, the avant-garde

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inheritance. Hearing it read off that way is profoundly depressing, because it embodies such a clear historical *cul de sac*. But on the other hand I don't think we can reject the possibility that it might represent one of those necessary fictions that enable artists to accomplish something.

Ozick: It means you always dump your progenitor, though, and it seems to me that experiment in art is not the same as innovation in the human psyche; just the opposite. Experiment in art has as its motivation the extension of humanity, not a flow of spite against it. Culture is the continuation of expectations. The difference between barbarian and civilized expectations is the difference between the will to dominate and the will toward regeneration. To dominate, you must throw the rascals out; to regenerate, you have to take them with you. The point of the risk of art, especially the risk of innovative art, is the continuation of a recognizably human enterprise. I don't know how dumping one's progenitors, or finding the past useless, can be a leavening for creation.

Grossman: It can't. The list sounds like an alphabet of errors, and I don't see how anyone who strictly adheres to it from the beginning can produce art worth anything. On the other hand, a certain strong, outwardly unruly, conscious sense of rebellion, and informed discontent with what has gone before, what has been tried before and achieved or failed at, is a necessary element for new achievement in the arts of any sort, especially for productions that are not merely talented but actually masterful.

Kramer: Well, historically it can't be denied that certain writers, functioning—consciously functioning—on the basis of the principles defined in that list created masterpieces. Whether these masterpieces were also based on an unacknowledged commitment to their inherited culture is another matter. That was one of the things I was concerned to explore in my essay, that avant-garde culture has for the most part operated on two levels, an avowed repudiation of inherited traditions and an unavowed building on them.

Grossman: At least one of the items in that list says there's nothing worthwhile in what has gone before.

Kramer: Many modern artists have made that avowal but have based their practice on something quite different.

Grossman: The avowal itself was not, as it is often today, based on ignorance; one was more apt to know pretty well, with some intimacy, what one was claiming to reject.

Jack Richardson: Doesn't that list really exemplify what happens when the dwellers in the City of Man try to form their own catechism, without quite understanding what is going on in the City of God? I don't think any artist ever wrote on the basis of a belief in those principles. Certainly, I can think of very few who would endorse psychedelic experience, except in the last five years or so, and those who have endorsed it have not been particularly productive.

Ozick: What about the poets—the Diane Wakoskis and the lesser Wakoskis?

Richardson: I was thinking more in the context of the history of Western art, or at least Western art as it has emerged in the last two hundred years. The dominating notion—a romantic one—is of art as a process, an evolutionary process. Your list of precepts for the young creator embodies what I would call a certain form of philistinism that is in evidence today, in which one is told that the artistic process is concerned with discovery and freshness. This is a commonplace in every organ of opinion in the society, but it has never really been the case for a serious working artist.

The great works of the so-called avant-garde are the products of perhaps twenty to twenty-five artists. These people are a problem for us, and a problem in particular for young writers and artists, because in their power, in the completeness with which they worked, in—to use Mr. Trilling's phrase—the religious intensity they devoted to their efforts, they left very little room for followers. So we have now a situation where every writer, every creator, must pay attention to these models, but he cannot learn from them. The avant-garde is not a tradition of master and pupil, but of heroes and epigoni. This, to get back to the distinction between the cultures, is where Clement Greenberg seems to me to have oversimplified, in assuming that his high culture would just go along very nicely, supported either politically or by an elite group of critics, without presenting any sort of serious problem to artists themselves.

Podhoretz: I'd like to stick to the historical question for a moment. The relation between high culture and popular culture in the pre-modern age was thought to be continuous. What the 20th-century theorists of mass culture told us was that something new had happened in the modern world: the masses had become literate, or industrialization had spread the products of art to people who had previously been walled off, and this created a disjunction between the culture of the educated classes and the culture of the masses. Is that true? Did modernity create a new situation for culture, and if it did, has that situation by now become more or less normalized?

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Trilling: In one sense it is today's situation, not yesterday's, that is unique, in that there has never been a national polity which felt that it had to contribute a large part of its budget to the support of high art. This is an amazing fact, isn't it, that in our day art can assert and enforce so exigent a moral claim upon society?

Richardson: Isn't that simply the democratic form of patronage?

Trilling: Yes, I suppose it is. Still, to put the issue to a whole people, to put it to a polity, that art is of such compelling importance—this, it seems to me, is different from old forms of patronage.

Richardson: *Has* it been put, though? I don't know of any referendum.

Trilling: There've been no marches on Washington protesting the allocation of these millions of dollars, or demanding they be spent in other ways.

Kramer: It's been the experience of administrators of both state arts councils and of the National Endowment that as soon as the money begins to appear, more and more people want some.

Richardson: That's not a unique experience.

Kramer: I'm speaking of backwater communities, where you might have had reason to expect some cry of protest. Why spend New York State tax money on ballet dancers when we need a new Route 59? But, instead, that little community wants the ballet dancers to come to its crossroads.

Richardson: I'm sure that's true, but there will always be in every local community an interest on the part of a few people for cultural programs.

Kramer: Your assumption is that it's only a few people, but that turns out not to be the case.

What does seem to be the case, though—and here we touch on something central to the discussion—is that under modern democratic industrial conditions high culture tends to become a specialized experience, a pastime, in effect, not a generalized experience of aesthetic values that might carry over into other aspects of life. It becomes narrowly focused and institutionalized. Yet this too is, historically, not so much an innovation as a normalization. At Versailles high culture was indeed just such a pastime; incidentally, I'm sure Louis XIV spent much more than a hundredth of his defense budget on it. One of the things that has happened to high culture in democratic society is that it has become available to larger numbers of people as a pastime, precisely as it used to be for the privileged classes.

Michael Novak: Raymond Williams has observed, accurately I think, that both high and popular culture exist at every class level; in the academy especially what is called high culture is in fact sometimes simply a form of popular culture, incorporating the ordinary biases and directions and tastes of the age. Williams also makes the point that popular culture now tends to be produced by the educated classes—it's the university people who are the producers of the movies, the television shows, the novels, and so forth, that are put out as low culture. What they really represent in Williams's view is the educated person's fantasy of what the workingman's world is like.

Kramer: The creation of kitsch always required a highly trained class of cultural technicians. I'm not sure there's a contradiction there.

Trilling: The movies seem to me to be the test case here: a popular form that moved upward from a low, crass estate (which, to be sure, we now look back on nostalgically) to the highest levels of culture. Now movies are the great aesthetic experience, and people refer to films, moments in films, the way we used to refer to moments in books.

Podhoretz: Actually, I think it's the way people used to refer to moments in the Broadway theater. Broadway in effect has moved to Hollywood, and just as Broadway in a certain period was regarded as serious art by a certain public, while the movies were sub-artistic, now the movies have moved up a notch and it's television that is regarded as sub-artistic by the same kind of public that once was solemn about the Broadway theater and sniffy about Hollywood.

Kramer: I don't recall that intellectuals took Broadway as seriously as they now take films.

Podhoretz: The problem is in defining who are the intellectuals; just as we don't any longer know what high culture is, we don't know who the intellectuals are. I mean that the same *kinds* of people who took the theater—it wasn't called Broadway, it was called "the theater"—seriously during the 1920's now take the movies seriously in exactly the same way, and many of the same kinds of people, incidentally, who used to identify with "the theater" now make films: Mike Nichols is a good case in point.

The audience, however, is no longer as humble as it used to be. Whatever today's audience loves, it insists is very important, and significant, and high art. If it loves the Beatles, they must be better than Beethoven, or at least as good. And that's a difference. Twenty years ago it was possible to love the movies without pretending, or without feeling the need to pretend, that John Ford was

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an artist of comparable stature to Ibsen. Today you will find very few people willing to say that John Ford is good of his own kind, and perhaps not so good in relation to other kinds.

In the political arena in this country, we have a means by which pluralistic contentions are reconciled. The entire system exists to arrive at accommodations and compromises with which contending groups can all live. We have something like a pluralistic assertion now being made in the area of culture—the assertion that all artistic endeavors are equal, and equally excellent—but there exists no mechanism for reconciling contending claims.

Kramer: Another way of putting the point is that the great threat that hangs over high culture in a democratic, pluralistic system is the threat of a loss of standards, and a loss of the means for preserving them. The institutions that were created to preserve the standards of high culture have fallen into confusion about what those standards are, and have felt an obligation to extend their prestige to forms of culture that represent something less than high culture.

Trilling: Let me come in just to confirm that, because it is a matter that has been occupying me lately. What is going on in the universities in this regard is very striking; I mean the impulse to include in the curriculum all sorts of writers who doubtless have their interest but who surely are very far removed from greatness. It no longer is true that a student who "majors" in English literature knows the traditional *corpus* of English literature. It used to be, for example, that when you took your oral examinations at Columbia for the Ph.D., you had to know with some degree of scholarly thoroughness one of the three great writers of England, and they of course were Chaucer, Milton, and Shakespeare. This is nowadays thought to be much too exclusive a list. Maybe it is, but I find myself dismayed by the permitted additions to it, by the fact that Virginia Woolf is likely to be the author that a typical Ph.D. candidate today thinks he ought to know best. And now I see that the Modern Language Association has an annual seminar devoted to Doris Lessing.

Podhoretz: An *annual* seminar?

Trilling: I think so—I recently looked at a volume of Doris Lessing's occasional pieces edited by someone who is identified as head of *the* Doris Lessing Seminar of the Modern Language Association. Increasingly our curriculum of literary study invites the student to the consideration of contemporary writers of dubious or secondary value.

Podhoretz: That brings us to another aspect of the general problem which it may be pertinent to mention here, namely the threat—some would consider it an opportunity or challenge—of a Balkanization along ethnic lines of our sense of the culture. You see this in the universities in the form of various programs of ethnic studies, which have now also come to include women's studies; the Doris Lessing Seminar would probably fall under that general rubric. The same sort of thing is now being institutionalized in the elementary and high schools.

Kramer: Is it possible to maintain high culture for an indefinite historical term without the recognition that there are certain classics, certain masterworks, that must be transmitted as the central body of culture from one generation to another? I don't think we are acquainted with any high cultures in which such a transmission has not occurred. To some extent, the universities, the museums, the serious journals, such as they are, still operate on the assumption that there exists a cultural class in possession of this central body of works, but we all know that in reality that class becomes smaller and smaller each year.

Richardson: We should make a distinction when we speak of high culture between a certain attitude of mind on the one hand and, on the other, the cultural data that are used by the universities in their courses of study. There is something unchanging about the former; whereas the latter is very much subject to historical fashion. A seminar on Doris Lessing—that does take me aback somewhat; but I imagine that when Dickens was taught in the universities for the first time and Latin and Greek were dropped as prerequisites, people felt that as a bad omen too.

Kramer: And they were right.

Richardson: That is another case that could be argued.

Kramer: No, I agree, modifications can occur, and should occur, in our notion of what the central body of masterworks consists of, but the point is it shouldn't be absolutely fluid.

Now, I myself am much more disturbed about seminars on John Ford than I am about seminars on Doris Lessing.

Podhoretz: That's your visual parochialism.

Kramer: But Doris Lessing is still what you might call a "reading experience." Her books deal with serious and often difficult experience.

Richardson: The point I'm trying to make is that high culture is not a series of works that must be read, listened to, or looked at.

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Ozick: Why isn't it?

Kramer: Whether it is or not, can it exist without that body of works?

Richardson: I should have said that it's not a coextensive definition: you don't say high culture and then list every great work you approve of and rest on that. Culture then becomes nothing but a question of individual biography.

If there is anything like a definition of high culture, then it must be found in a quality of mind, a spiritual need for investigation that need not be linked to any particular work of art, or any particular style, or any particular mode of expression. It is this desire to study life intensely that needs defending from vulgarization. This is the attitude that I think is threatened in a democratic society, is in danger of becoming—what shall I say?—overcome by the notion of polls, publicity, of referenda, things like that.

Culture is being catered to in our democracy, but what is being produced except some satisfaction over the expense involved? So far as drama is concerned, public support of culture has put up about twenty-five terrible repertory companies throughout the country. But what else?

Ozick: If the repertory companies are awful, and the high cultural spirit is absent, might that not be related in some way to the loss of that attitude in the universities which required Chaucer, Milton, and Shakespeare? It is true that Dickens was once regarded as a popular frivolity, and it took a few generations for his work to achieve classic stature, but that was simply a matter of waiting for posterity to seize its perspective, it did not signify that the canon of masterpieces was closed. The canon is always open; it's a question of accretion and time. But there has to be a link, doesn't there, between an education that stresses the spiritual attitude of investigation and the consequences of that attitude in the world of artistic creation? If there are undistinguished repertory companies and subliterate poets, it means somebody isn't getting educated.

Richardson: That's true. Most people aren't getting educated. And that is because the results, rather than the methods, of inquiry are emphasized by the people who teach and the people who criticize.

Podhoretz: The attitude you are talking about is something like high seriousness. Are you suggesting that nothing can be done to protect, or preserve, or promote this attitude? You say that trying to subsidize it with money doesn't do much good.

Richardson: It all depends on who subsidizes it. It's odd that the Elizabethan court could succeed at promoting it, that Louis XIV was successful at it.

Podhoretz: Maybe they had someone to subsidize.

Richardson: That's always possible. But I would venture to say that Elizabeth and Louis were in agreement with the artists they employed about the need for moments of artistic coherence, amusement, and artifice. Whereas foundations and the people who supply the money now, including the audience, are not.

Podhoretz: My understanding is that very few people have complained about the kinds of grants that the National Endowment for the Arts has given. There *were* fears that innovative work, or experimental work, would be penalized, that a certain kind of "Middle American" attitude would prevail. But in point of fact, the grants have been very "enlightened" and not at all "philistine." So it's not that the money is being given to the wrong people, or that no one knows what he wants, or that there is a difference between what the people giving the money want to see and what artists want to produce. Perhaps it is the dominant, advanced sectors of the culture that are themselves in some way diseased. Maybe there is something wrong, not with the society—we all know there is everything wrong with the society—or with the dispensers of patronage, but with the condition of the arts and people who aspire to create.

Trilling: I would like to ask a question which I think a few of us have already adumbrated. What is the basis of our society's belief that art is so important? What do we expect of it? Only good, it seems. I am quite open to the idea that art can produce bad effects as well as good ones, even that what might be called good art can produce bad effects.

I am not altogether comfortable seeing the great number of students who are committed to literature and who read the kinds of things they do read—my sense is that something may be happening to their personal fiber which I am not sure I like, and I often feel that I would much rather see them doing history, or philosophy, or anthropology, or politics—almost any humane subject rather than literature.

To the question I referred to, why art is thought to be important and beneficent, the answer commonly given is that art makes one more conscious, more aware, more sensitive, and that the more conscious, aware, and sensitive one is, the more sympathetic and responsive one is to other people. I am not sure that art actually does have this effect, and I would like to hear why, apart from its usefulness as entertainment, art should be supported.

Podhoretz: I'm delighted to see you turning from

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Dostoevsky to Tolstoy—this is a new development in the intellectual growth of Lionel Trilling.

Trilling: Oh, this is old with me.

Podhoretz: But it *is* very Tolstoyan, this question. Can anyone answer it?

Richardson: What can one say? It is an open point. Art certainly can have bad effects, depending upon the person judging those effects, of course. You can say that certain books have not made life easier for a lot of people. I think you can say that the whole artistic experience doesn't make life easier for anybody.

Kramer: The assumption has been that the great value that is placed on art, apart from its value as a pastime, as an entertainment, is that it puts one in a more profound possession of reality. As far as I'm concerned, that is sufficient defense.

Trilling: That's what it does ideally. That is what we, when we deal with it as part of education, say we believe. But I wonder whether it is not in fact *blinding* people to reality, making them concerned only with themselves, creating such self-pity, such self-regard, that they can't respond to reality.

Kramer: That suggests another question, about the place of criticism. Is there some necessary role in the life of the arts, or the life of high culture, that high criticism should play that is no longer being played in our culture at this particular moment? I think the questions raised as to the corrupting effect of certain modes of art are directly related to the decline in the function and standards of criticism.

For myself, I think that criticism is absolutely central to the life of high culture in a democratic society. Far from being external to the arts, or parasitic, as it is sometimes regarded by artists themselves, it really provides a kind of medium of intelligence through which art is experienced. Its role, if you will, is to perform an act of moral discrimination, which it is not always necessary or possible for art to perform on itself. One of the reasons the arts are in the state they are in today is that the so-called "age of criticism," which was ludicrously deplored twenty years ago, is over. The lamentations turned out to be a farewell. We no longer have criticism in that older sense, and we scarcely have journals where it could appear if it wanted to will itself into existence again. Yet it was formerly the case that one's initiation into the arts was also an initiation into critical discrimination, whereas now an initiation into the arts sometimes amounts virtually to a repudiation of critical discrimination.

Podhoretz: Why has criticism declined?

Trilling: That, as they say, is a good question.

Grossman: Not such a good answer to it, yet one that occurs to me anyway, is that this is still the Age of Aquarius we are living in, even though it may be waning, and critics are born under the sign of Virgo. In other words, critical suspicion, lack of initial enthusiasm, is suspect. I believe that in some quarters it has come close to being regarded as proof of a moral flaw, not just a symptomatic inability to respond. Exact explication, let alone self-conscious "acts of moral discrimination"—to use Hilton Kramer's phrase—have not been in great demand lately, to say the least; which is to say neither that such criticism has not been needed, nor that a healthy dose of it would have been a cure-all.

Novak: One factor, I think, is the advent of the real power of mass media. I mean, the power of *Time, Newsweek, New York,* and the *New Yorker,* say, and of television, and the ease with which public discussion is dominated by those forces. A powerful "enlightened opinion" has been generated.

Kramer: I'm not sure. I don't think the pressures of the mass media are greater today than they were twenty-five years ago; what is significantly different is the absence of the countervailing pressure of intellectual seriousness.

Trilling: Perhaps the institutionalization of art carries with it a kind of sanction which criticism finds it hard to challenge. There is a strong body of opinion which holds that criticism is a conservative force, that it interferes with the artist and checks and inhibits his work. The whole enterprise of art would do better, according to this view, if discriminations were *not* made. You really are not supposed to grade, you are not supposed to say that this, as opposed to that, is the thing we ought to admire. Rather, you ought to respond, with a genial lack of preference, to the whole process of art, the whole of the artist's engagement with it.

The reception that was accorded Harold Rosenberg's recent book, *The De-definition of Art,* is typical of this attitude. It was said that because he believes that certain recent examples of painting are foolish or frivolous, Rosenberg is no longer capable of responding to new art. One of the hardest things in the world is to put yourself into an antagonistic critical relationship to what claims to be new; a kind of intimidation is exercised by the force of the ongoing enterprise of art. I have not read any reviews of Rosenberg which grant him the right to make reasoned adverse judgments on new art.

Kramer: Well, in Rosenberg's case I feel there is both a poetic and moral justice involved in the

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way that book has been received, because the whole basis of his critical career, *The Tradition of the New,* and the essay on the American action painters in *The Tradition of the New,* upheld an anti-critical position that he is now recoiling from, and he has never felt the obligation to go back and re-examine those original premises.

In that first famous essay on the so-called American action painters, Rosenberg specifically states that what these artists have done, what they have created, is not a work of art but an "event," they have acted out a personal event on canvas that cannot be judged by aesthetic criteria, and those who approach such works using aesthetic criteria have misunderstood the existential aspiration they embody.

Now, that, in my view, was a total misreading of the art in question. Yet when the art came along that really *did* represent those unbounded events of which he spoke, Rosenberg simply recoiled without ever granting recognition to the connection between the theory he had once advocated and these new concrete examples of it.

Novak: The tyranny of the new is one of the features of a culture based on instant communications. The relatively sudden advent of this culture has temporarily unbalanced our conception of the new—the serious new and the trivial new. Twenty-four-hour-a-day communications discourage critical discrimination. An elite of "opinion leaders" may in some ways be enlightened, in other ways dangerous.

Podhoretz: Aren't some of us tending toward the proposition that the proper role of criticism today is to say No to the advanced culture? That is, if it was thought at an earlier period that the proper role of a critical community was to stand in an adversary relation to the general society, may it not be the case that the proper, perhaps the only, role for a critical community at this moment would be to stand in an adversary relation to the adversary culture itself, as it is now understood? Of course, Lionel Trilling himself said that ten years ago in the very essay in which he first used the phrase, "adversary culture."

Richardson: There simply can't be a categorical duty to oppose everything.

Trilling: I would like to interpose that I did not say "oppose."

Kramer: I think the issue might be rephrased. If we say that it is the function of the criticism of the intellectual community to take a stand against advanced culture, the word "advanced" ought to be put in quotation marks. The point is not to oppose advanced culture but to reveal its lack of any claim to being considered "advanced."

Podhoretz: I would certainly accept that emendation. But there are still plenty of people who would quarrel if the formulation were even more exquisite than that.

Obviously, any critic has to address himself to individual works and make individual judgments and discriminations. There is a larger context, however, in which these discriminations are made. What I am proposing is that the function of criticism at the present time, to borrow Matthew Arnold's phrase, be determined by the realities of the cultural situation, and the reality of the cultural situation in which we find ourselves is that what was formerly an embattled, minority point of view, associated with the best of traditional values as well as with a desire to innovate and explore, and with an attitude of high seriousness, has now become, as it were, massified, and has turned into the kind of threat to high culture that it imagines itself to be fighting. I myself would suggest that one of the reasons criticism has declined is that too few critics have been willing to accept this definition of the situation, and even those who have been willing to accept it have had neither the desire nor, if you like, the courage to perform their proper job—a job which not only is difficult to perform in itself but leaves one open to a good deal of abuse.

Trilling: It does, indeed. Still, to define the function of criticism as oppositional seems to me dangerous. The great movement of criticism in the "age of criticism" was a positive one. Its goal was to take the works of present and past ages and show the nature and full extent of their meaning. To envisage a critical movement that would stand in opposition is, I would say, simply in the nature of the case self-defeating, although I go along with you in saying that the critic has abdicated his proper role.

Podhoretz: You know, the game of football was revolutionized when it was discovered that defense, if played properly, contributed to offense. I'm not so sure that the defensive role I've suggested is necessarily negative. Everything depends on conditions. If there were a body of new art today that had to be explicated and brought to public consciousness, that would be wonderful, wouldn't it? But what do you do in a situation where there isn't any?

Trilling: You become historical-minded.

Kramer: The way I put it in my essay was that I felt the function of criticism now was an archeological one, and by that I meant, as I think the context made clear, keeping alive a sense of masterworks, of tradition, of the central body of past work, and keeping alive too a standard of values, on the assumption that a new artistic growth might emerge from a continued articulation of

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what the great works of the past really signified for us.

Richardson: How then is a critic different from a teacher? The functions do overlap, but there should be some distinction made between those who teach us how to see the past vividly and those who search for new forms of cultural energy.

Kramer: I don't think you can separate those functions in serious criticism, but probably criticism has more teacherly functions to perform now than a generation ago, because teaching has relinquished so many of its traditional responsibilities.

Richardson: True. It's just that we all share less than a similar cultural tradition. I think what is really needed is the courage to make judgments and to make those judgments without the complacency of a traditionalist.

Kramer: But whom are you deceiving? If in making a judgment of a new work, you base part of that judgment on a standard that is based in turn on your experience of the classics, and if, say, in examining the function of your own sensibility, you become aware that your knowledge of a certain work of Shakespeare's has entered into your experience of a new play, why deny it?

Richardson: Oh, there's no way you can keep it out, but I just say you don't make it the prime function of the judgment.

Kramer: I think the extent to which it enters into critical discourse is in direct ratio to the quality of the work you're dealing with.

Richardson: Insofar as the work is more complex, you have to draw on more resources. We are both talking about serious criticism, detailed criticism, that's true, but what I am trying to say is that the courage to make judgments, to formulate judgments, is where a critic's entire being lies.

Kramer: Oh, absolutely. I earn my living at it.

Richardson: Yes. When you read Dr. Johnson, you are not reading the result of an Oxford education so much as you're reading an attitude, an attitude of the man, and of the period, with all the prejudices and all the absurdities involved, all the critical misstatements—or what we have come to think of as misstatements. To consider whether all this is defending culture, or encouraging barbaric license, is really irrelevant to our appreciation of the force of Johnson's criticism. I agree one shouldn't be a critic unless one has acquired what you speak of, this tradition, but I don't think it needs to be defended, I don't think it needs to be articulated.

Kramer: There we disagree. I think we have come to a point where it needs to be defended and articulated.

Richardson: But it has changed so radically. What Mr. Trilling teaches today will not be taught in a hundred years, and what was taught in Johnson's time is quite different from what is taught now.

Trilling: Is it not possible—this is a fantastic idea, really—that a disjunction has occurred between the tradition and what is happening now, and that all the assumptions that have hitherto been made about painting, let us say, no longer hold true, that you can't continue, can't transfer the old assumptions to the new reality, that discontinuity has become perfect?

Ozick: I see the real disjunction taking place with the advent of the New Criticism itself, which innovated through abdication. The hope of criticism had always been the capacity to stand apart from the *Zeitgeist* in order to make a judgment on it. The New Criticism, like movie criticism today, ignored the social, psychological, historical, even aesthetic, environment, and went into mechanics, into tinkering and process, the way movie criticism deals with tinkering and process. The disjunction, it seems to me, comes from renouncing the role of judge, and this is true for critics and artists alike. You have to have in the artist as well as in the critic some attitude of mind which will have as a premise the willingness to interpret and to be interpreted. If the present situation is to be rescued, then artists themselves must stand up against "Against Interpretation." They must say: I will not be merely responsive, merely my own experience; I will not express only the unmediated flow of Self, but rather will dare to make a judgment. Critics and artists alike need to stop regarding themselves as a medium for the *Zeitgeist*. There's not enough judgment—and by "judgment" I mean not simply opinion, but bringing to bear on a work history, character, and other speculations—and there is certainly no interpretation.

Podhoretz: I see judgments being made all the time, and most of them seem to me to be bad. We're being told every week that a new masterpiece has opened at the Paris movie theater, there have been eight masterpieces published by Random House, and so on. Conversely, when a work comes along that seems good, as often as not it gets ignored or attacked. And all this bad judgment is far from being harmless or without effect. I believe it matters profoundly when a bad book is praised or a good book is ignored or attacked. Harm is done.

Trilling: A lie is established in society.

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Kramer: Yes. And the heroic position movie critics seem to occupy in our culture doesn't quite accord with Cynthia Ozick's view of things, either. When I was teaching at Yale last year I could never assume that any of my students had read a review of any book, but they had read Pauline Kael's most recent review in the *New Yorker* thirty times, and had been up all night debating it.

Grossman: These are just a small part of the moviegoing public.

Kramer: Well, the more serious part, or the more conscious part of it.

Grossman: Which is not the majority.

Kramer: I don't know if that is quite true; the moviegoing public itself is much smaller than it once was, and what we might call the conscious, or intellectually infected, portion of that audience is much larger than ever before in the history of the movies.

Grossman: But the actual population of the United States is growing, is much larger. What are all those people doing?

Kramer: Watching television.

Podhoretz: They are also buying books. The figures are very clear on this. I don't know what they do with them, but they buy them. There are fewer people going to the movies and more people buying books.

Grossman: How many of those people care what critics say?

Podhoretz: I don't know how to measure that. I agree with Hilton Kramer that never have movie critics had so much attention paid to them. As a matter of fact, the passion accorded movie criticism is not so different from the passion accorded the New Critics of literature when I was a student.

Kramer: Yes. You could write a concise cultural history of the period beginning with the time when serious undergraduates, "intellectual" undergraduates, aspired to become Edmund Wilson and ending with the time when they aspired to become Pauline Kael.

Podhoretz: From the back of the *New Yorker* to the middle of the *New Yorker*. Not so much has changed, after all.

Richardson: I think Mr. Trilling is quite correct, a disjunction *has* taken place, and that mode of criticism which eventuated in the extensive analysis of texts, with students producing papers on the uses of ambiguity in Zola, came to a point of crisis.

Podhoretz: That critical movement was born out of the need to establish the modernist revolution, and like any real critical movement, it then proceeded to reread the whole history of art, so that undergraduate papers on the use of ambiguity in Zola, or what have you, emerged out of a notion of the importance of ambiguity to art, which was itself a notion that was learned through paying attention to contemporary work, to modernist work. We don't have any such body of art at the moment, and therefore we don't have any such body of criticism.

Richardson: What I would like to know is, is this a specific historical fact, like the discovery of the New World? When criticism made this artistic attitude, the avant-garde, legitimate, by showing that its methods involved more the culmination of tradition than a capricious personal separation from it, was it really correct in doing so? Are we now lamenting the lack of critical and artistic energy simply because the artist and the critic of our generation have been led to believe that a few writers, musicians, and painters brought art to a marvelous conclusion?

Trilling: Certainly one can say that the young aspirant to literary achievement today does not feel himself to be continuous with the avant-garde of my youth. That is, he is not continuous with Joyce, with Eliot, with Lawrence, with Thomas Mann. Indeed, the last time I taught these authors, which is now about ten years ago, most of my "avant-garde" students rejected them as being too "organized," too "self-conscious," Mann especially. In a recent *Columbia Forum* there was a sad article about W. H. Auden's giving a class at Columbia, and the students' simply not understanding anything he was saying about poetry. They didn't understand what a form was, or why a line should go this way and not that. Their view was that a line just simply goes!

Richardson: Didn't something happen about ten years ago in our culture? The avant-garde of our generation more or less arrived and stayed put. It has been analyzed, it has become a collection of common experience, it has been shown to be more and more complex, again and again and again, through the New Criticism and other forms of veneration. Naturally a reaction set in, a fundamentalist reaction. What happened was that the concepts of truth, beauty, love, the concept of culture itself, had become so complex that they seemed inaccessible except to rare individuals. A whole cultural generation decided, no, we don't need this, we don't need the High Church trappings; we're going to be Baptists, we're going out into the desert and find out what

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our own relation is to the cultural spirit of our time.

And against that, what is the educator, what is the traditional critic to propose?

Kramer: I think it is important to recognize—and here I'm addressing myself to Jack Richardson and also to Lionel Trilling's remarks about the resistance of undergraduates ten years ago to the modernist masters—that this resistance had nothing to do with the New Criticism; it wasn't prompted by a surfeit of literary culture. Those undergraduates didn't come to Lawrence or Mann by way of R. P. Blackmur but by the way of the English Department's syllabus.

Richardson: I don't mean that they were surfeited. The modernist culture itself had become so demanding, so rigid, that a rebellion against it seems to be easily explained, along with the proclamation of the self as being of extreme importance, and the narrow notion of relevance as a standard. The rebellion was crude, but it did challenge us to explain what prompted our enthusiasm over this tradition in the first place. We didn't embrace it out of a sense of duty. It was a spiritual adventure. But these people felt stifled by it.

Podhoretz: But surely this rebellion was not a development forward in any sense. It was more like a counterrevolution, I believe. It's not as though all students at Columbia in the 40's adored Joyce and Mann and Proust; only a minority had a taste for these difficult writers, including in Mr. Trilling's classes, as I well remember. Most students in those days preferred easier writers, to the extent that they cared about writers at all, and a lot of them didn't. But the indifferentists did not claim a special cultural status for themselves. The counterrevolution of the 60's, with its repudiation of the modernist canon, and indeed of rationality itself, posed as a further development of the modernist revolution but was in actuality a resurgence of philistinism, very often of simple cultural barbarism. We don't want any of that stuff, it said, and not only don't we want it but we wish to be congratulated on our rejection of it; our rejection is a sign of our superiority.

Trilling: But that has to be understood not as we generally understand philistinism. I think if we look at it objectively, we have to see that it is a counterculture undertaking to assume a moralized position in relation both to bourgeois life and to the high cultural life. We can criticize it adversely, but we can't, as it were, assimilate it to mere vulgarity.

Podhoretz: Well, I'm not so sure whether we can or not. In some ways the Beat generation of the 50's was a harbinger of these attitudes, and we certainly can't assimilate Allen Ginsberg to mere vulgarity. But I think we can so assimilate many of his followers, and that as we move along the scale we get closer and closer to something very like ordinary philistinism, a movement which for purposes of legitimation fancies itself an ideological counterculture, but which in fact serves as a screen, or cover, for an eruption of cultural barbarism.

Trilling: The high culture may also be thought of as a screen for the behavior of the high bourgeoisie.

Podhoretz: That's true. The high culture can be thought of as such a screen, and it has indeed functioned as such a screen. But there is an additional complication here: the anti-cultural movement of the 60's was the expression of a class which was itself drawn from the high bourgeoisie. The counterculture, which pretended to attack high bourgeois culture, *was* high bourgeois culture at a certain stage of its development.

Kramer: Can we be a little more specific in talking about the 60's? Certain figures emerged as heroes of high culture in the 60's under the general banner of an attack on high culture, and they effected a significant modification in attitudes as a result—McLuhan, Mailer in his 60's embodiment, Susan Sontag, Allen Ginsberg. What is interesting in the context of today's discussion is not so much what they signified in the long run as the response that serious intellectuals made to them. I think one could say that there was, to invoke an old phrase, a kind of failure of nerve, an intellectual abdication in the face of pressure. That pressure can be generalized to represent an attack on mind, an attack on the high functions of mind; the intellectual community as a whole simply abdicated its function in responding to that attack.

Richardson: If you are faced with an extreme situation, where someone is demanding to know the reason behind your entire existence, and you come up with nothing more than the belief in nuance and ambiguity—well, these are not words that send youth to the barricades.

But all right. Say there was an abdication of responsibility, that people who supposedly knew better did begin endorsing things they would not have five years prior. What happened? Are the values we're talking about so fragile and inconsequential that they can't withstand an onslaught of a moral nature?

Grossman: It's not clear they are as fragile as all that. Perhaps they have survived the values that supposedly took their place, which were very new and seemingly powerful a few years ago and may not be so now. The question is not how fragile they are but whether they can be put to the uses

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that were demanded of values at that time, namely, service on the so-called barricades.

Novak: A factor here is the multiplication of the numbers of people upholding the values of the "adversary" culture, and the rather false position they were in. That is, "subversive" slogans were being shouted from established positions—the universities, the media, and so forth.

Richardson: Still, if one is being completely honest one must harbor constant doubt. Faced with somebody with a final alternative, one can really do nothing but fall back on a personal response, a belief that life deserves a certain kind of treatment; if others believe it doesn't, we can only try to make our prejudices appear more impressive than theirs. In a funny way there is a great deal of charlatanism involved in this attitude that we take about the critic of culture whose guiding spirit, I suppose, is Matthew Arnold. Who *is* this man standing there, directing intellectual traffic, holding up one line, letting another pass—what is he doing? Where does he get his signals from? We talk about universal notions of culture, but the matter seems to me best left up to individual resourcefulness, expressions of which, when we agree with them, we call defenses of culture.

Podhoretz: Isn't there a situation, a more general situation, to which we can address ourselves?

Richardson: I think we can, there's some sort of a community, a cohesive body of experience that can be shared. But it's *our* experience, and others' can very well be different, and I don't see any use—unless you can show a social advantage to this particular tradition, some utilitarian value—in trying to insist on its universal applicability. Lionel Trilling intimated that art was a spiritual substitute, and indeed it was, for a great many people it was. It gave a mystical exhilaration to their lives. I don't think that faith exists any more, particularly.

Trilling: Again what we have to keep our minds open to is the possibility of profound cultural change, such a change as overtook the sensibility at the time of the Industrial Revolution, let's say, or the Reformation, and that reaches into every aspect of life: the way of judgment, notions of hierarchy, notions of deference, notions of training, education, and so on.

Kramer: Assuming for the moment that we are undergoing one of these vast geologic shifts, do we have reason to believe that it is inevitably a part of the scenario of democratic society that high culture suffer the kind of dissolution it has? Was it in the cards, given democratic society, that high culture undergo the kind of attack or decline that it suffered in the 60's?

Podhoretz: Many people said that it was, of course; many 19th-century critics believed it would happen. But I must say, first of all, that I resist the idea that we are undergoing a major change, that this is a mutational generation, as Leslie Fiedler was arguing a few years ago, or that a radical break has occurred with the past. One suspects that this is part of our vanity, our wishing to see ourselves as unique in all of human history—in fact you can make as good a case for continuity as you can for disjunction. It seems to me we would do well to stay on the plane of the responsibility of intellectuals, or indeed the responsibility of any group of people, for doing what it is they might be thought obligated to do. In other words, I find a better explanation for the difficulties facing certain aspects of the culture in the failure of a given class of people to perform the job they were supposed to perform than in any semi-deterministic speculations on why it is necessary that this be so.

Second of all, I don't believe for a minute that democratic societies cannot develop a distinguished cultural life. I do believe, though—and this is in answer to Jack Richardson's point—that the values of high culture, the belief in the importance of art, the belief in the importance of mind, the belief in the importance of discrimination, of reasoned, not arbitrary, judgment—that the belief in the importance of these enterprises either exists in the minds and hearts of people who are engaged in them, as an act of faith, if you like, or they do not exist at all. This is true in principle of any set of values. The importance of civil liberties, to take another example, is not self-evident, or given by God, it exists in the minds and hearts of people in a particular society and in the institutions they build to protect those values; the minute people stop believing in their importance, they disappear.

Now, there was, and is, a class of people in this society who are neither self-appointed nor appointed by God but who commit themselves to artistic and intellectual enterprises, and who are therefore obligated to defend those enterprises when they are under attack, out of elementary self-respect if nothing else; if that class of persons suffers a failure of nerve, it is hardly to be wondered at that no one else will speak for those values.

As for why such a failure of nerve took place, my explanation would be expressed in moral language: there was an epidemic of cowardice, together with an enormous panic to get on the right side of what looked like a triumphant revolution.

Kramer: There was something else, too: the enormous promise implicit in the countercultural position, the promise of being able to start one's life over again from the beginning, the promise of youth, of eternal possibility, of escape from complexity.

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Trilling: I am put in mind by this of an earlier promise, the promise of Marxist Communism as it was experienced by the Stalinists of my generation. Like this promise, that one entailed a rejection of the notion of society and all the strains, difficulties, contradictions, of living a social life.

There is a reason to say cowardice in individual cases, but as a general explanation of the situation Norman Podhoretz refers to I think the word "cowardice" might lead us astray. One has to conceive of it rather in terms of fatigue and of, as it were, alienation. Subjects and problems got presented in a way that made one's spirits fail. It wasn't that one was afraid to go into it, or afraid of being in opposition—I suppose I am speaking personally—but rather that in looking at the matter one's reaction was likely to be a despairing shrug. The terms weren't what one was used to, they didn't come at one in a way that would elicit a positive response.

Kramer: Surely you wouldn't deny that there were cases in which people were terrified to find themselves on the wrong side?

Trilling: Yes, there were indeed. But if you look at the thing from a large historical perspective, cowardice isn't quite the answer, it doesn't quite explain the movement of an entire class. Something has happened to make cowardice a possibility. Not that anyone is exempted from fulfilling his duties as an intellectual, but something has been going on for a sizable number of years, which is the disaffection of the middle class—I take it we are talking about the middle class—from its own life.

Kramer: Certainly the middle class does not seem to have been able to generate any compelling romance about itself that has not involved the repudiation of its own mode of life.

Trilling: Historically that is certainly true. That's all literature has been about for the last 200 years.

Podhoretz: This is the only ruling class in history that has been unable to coopt the "poets," that has not been celebrated by its artists, that has come to subsidize a class of artists who are not only hostile to it but evidently hostile to the death. There has been a war between the life of the middle class and the culture of the middle class, and the hostility of the culture—meaning the arts—toward the middle-class way of life has resulted in a complete undermining of society's sense of itself.

Trilling: One of the most fascinating occurrences, I think, in the history of the world.

Kramer: The parallel you drew between the response to the counterculture in the 60's and the Stalinist phenomenon in the 30's is instructive. One of the things that may have made the counterculture so compelling for intellectuals in the 60's was an advantage it had over Stalinism, namely, the promise of "paradise now." Stalinism at least had a puritanical strain in it, deferring gratification until the victory of the proletariat.

Podhoretz: Communism is tomorrow; the orgy is tonight.

Richardson: The intellectual, the traditional bourgeois critic, believed wholeheartedly in attacking bourgeois society, attacking the middle class and revolting against it in his own way. The counterculture was continuous with this.

Kramer: Yes. You are saying that what the counterculture did was to call the bluff of bourgeois critics.

Richardson: It said, in effect, you pretend disaffection but in point of fact you're quite comfortable with the social arrangement of things, with the fact that hardly any danger exists of your opinions' having a practical consequence.

But to get back to the theme of cowardice. I think every person, or at least every critic, should consider that there may very well be an alternative to his beliefs—I mean a superior alternative. And if you are not open to that possibility, then you are being excessively rigid, posing absolutes, substituting self-righteousness for judgment.

Podhoretz: I guess I didn't make myself clear. Yes, you should always believe there may be superior alternatives to your own way of life, but if you are challenged, if someone declares war on you and says you are evil, you can either say yes, you're right, do with me what you will, or you can say, maybe I'm not perfect but I'm not going to offer my throat to your knife. You needn't be in possession of an absolute truth in order to defend yourself against assault, especially a murderous assault.

Richardson: I don't see it as an assault. I don't think critics felt they were being threatened, that this particular episode threatened what they considered important.

Kramer: I disagree with that. Criticism was absolutely on the line. The reception accorded a book like Susan Sontag's *Against Interpretation* signalled the readiness of a large part of the literary world to embrace the notion that it had inflicted a cruel falsification upon literature by attempting to interpret it.

Richardson: But I am saying, when these critical beliefs are attacked, the people who are attacking

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are only doing what the critic must do all the time, challenge his own beliefs.

Podhoretz: It's not a matter of individual beliefs. The question raised was whether the enterprise itself is worth pursuing.

Novak: This is, after all, an argument often used about liberal democratic societies, that they are necessarily built on such a basis of self-doubt that they will be weak and flaccid when it comes to the point of action. Then there is the self-doubt that arises from the experience of guerrilla war and terrorism. One thinks of France during the Algerian war, and of course of our own country's experience during the Vietnam war. Yet a novel like Alan Lelchuk's *American Mischief* suggests another strain, as well. I'm not referring now to movements of protest, of new energy and criticism on the part of the younger generation, but to a so-called counterculture that takes out after all the monuments and vitalities of the culture itself.

Trilling: Don't we have to take into account that this is the first culture that calls itself a culture? This is the first time that there have been masses of conscious people thinking and judging their lives. Obviously, there were always enclaves of such people, but for the first time it runs beyond class, this sense that we *live* under certain conditions, and that they need not be what they are. The disaffection from the nature of modern life is universal.

Podhoretz: How does that affect the arts?

Trilling: Well, art is one of the things that generated this consciousness.

Podhoretz: Then where do we go from here? What do you think the future holds?

Kramer: This may sound like an odd comment coming from an employee of a large newspaper, but I myself think the future of high culture and of high art is going to be dependent on the willingness of a new class of artists and critics to forgo the immediate gratifications of influence and popularity. The extent to which mass media and mass institutions—museums, universities, publications, foundations—embrace everything new and everything claiming seriousness in the arts has engendered a feeling among artists and intellectuals that if one's work is not pursued in an atmosphere of immediate influence, acceptance, and popularity, then somehow the pursuit is not worthwhile. The future of high culture is going to depend very much, in my view, on regaining a sense of intellectual priesthood.

Grossman: The idea of the noble, impoverished artist in his garret like a monk in a chapel, is a patronizing, philistine, and bourgeois cliché, of course, yet there's no denying that the confusion between the avant-garde and kitsch, and the not entirely sincere disavowal of the usefulness of criticism and interpretation, have been roughly simultaneous with several generations of tremendous American prosperity, and the funding of all sorts of aspiring artists by tax-exempt foundations, philanthropies, the government, etc. Was it an accident that the Armory Show took place in the same year that the progressive income tax was enacted? Not much of officially-sponsored art, however, has been so epochal. If we are headed toward hard times, that might not be so unfortunate for writers and painters. I hope I am not naive to hope that some of the envy and invidious competition and disgust and loathing of self and work will diminish as money and grants dry up.

Trilling: That has great point, I think. That old feeling, which was the feeling of my youth, that if you made a success you were a fraud, has now been inverted. Now if you don't make a success you're a fraud.

Podhoretz: At least a fool.

Richardson: I don't see the point. Custodians of culture taking a few artifacts with them underground until the holocaust passes?

Kramer: Well, that's a satirized and vulgarized version of what I am implying, but I wouldn't completely repudiate it. I think when confronted with threats of destruction, it's not a bad thing to save a few artifacts.

Richardson: I just wondered about this destruction.

Kramer: I'm using your language.

Richardson: If the critical function is simply one of preservation. . . .

Kramer: It is not simply one of preservation—it isn't "simply" anything—but preservation is a part of its function.

Richardson: But surely a more dynamic role than simply that.

Podhoretz: T.S. Eliot, who isn't quoted much nowadays as a critic, defined the function of criticism as "the common pursuit of true judgment and the correction of taste."

Richardson: Did he correct your opinion of *Hamlet?*

Podhoretz: He made his mistakes, but he engaged in the common pursuit of true judgment.

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Richardson: Common with whom?

Podhoretz: With me, for one. My own view is that the masterpiece cometh as it listeth, but the general health of a culture is dependent on the kinds of critical discourse that we are engaged in. It matters which books are praised and which books are damned, which paintings are praised and which are damned, and there is a positive role for a discriminating, critical, common pursuit of true judgment in these matters.

Richardson: I am not denying that at all. I am simply objecting to a satisfaction with stasis.

Podhoretz: No danger of stasis.

Kramer: We could do with a little of it.

Novak: With regard to the notion of an intellectual priesthood, I myself would prefer a different metaphor, but that aside, I think we have to move on two different levels. High culture is terribly important, but we also need to find ways of strengthening popular cultures, which are presently being wiped out in large part by television and cinema. I am thinking now of that still great majority that does not go to college—that shares, now, in weaker and weaker cultural networks of any sort. Young children growing up are already learning a form of rebellion and discontent from the television set right in the living room. Parental authority, the authority of the mind, of the community, no longer exist—there is a nihilism in working-class neighborhoods that is frightening. The children in one community I know tied a child to a tree and left him there; another time they threw rocks at a child they had tied to a tree. Few parents can compete with the power of the images of the media, and if the media version of reality wins out on the level of the working class and the non-university class, we will have very deep trouble no matter how strong a high culture we have. Culture is ultimately of a piece.

Trilling: Why do you assume that it's nihilism that television is offering? It seems to me that one of the things we have to be aware of is the "virtue" that is promulgated by the media and the popular culture. You get a degree of cultural sophistication among masses of people today which, if I recall correctly, is exactly what we were trying to achieve in Columbia College thirty years ago, that readiness to criticize people in authority, that sense of the contradictions in culture. All this is being made available to everybody and is very quickly picked up.

Archibald Cox, in the opening sentence of his report on the Columbia disturbance in 1968, stated that today's younger generation, in the opinion of everyone, is the most gifted, the most intelligent, the most responsible generation the world has ever known. Where did that "intelligence" and "responsibility" come from? It came at a very early age, from the media. It is, to be sure, a false intelligence, it is a false responsibility, but it certainly has all the appearance of the real thing.

If you watch Dr. Welby, or Kojak, or Cannon, you will be filled with the highest ideals. You will learn tolerance and understanding, you will learn that the conventional way of doing things is not right. Nothing, it seems, is easier than to hold those ideals we fought so hard for in the 30's. Nothing is more self-justifying. We needn't now take time to consider that nothing stops one's further development more effectually than this ready-made self-justification. But with the appearance of intelligence and responsibility so facilely supplied by television, who needs literature?

Podhoretz: That's an argument against education.

Trilling: In a certain sense I am arguing against education.

Kramer: No, no, quite the contrary—it goes again to prove that literature is a more profound mode of moral instruction than television.

Trilling: It depends. Literature can be a more profound mode of instruction than television can probably ever be. But not necessarily.

Kramer: Not necessarily? Well, I think I would even say necessarily.

Novak: What I want to plead for, in any case, is a greater concentration of intellectual resources in the criticism of these media. They carry cultural functions that other agencies are losing.

Kramer: That is an interesting point. There really never has existed a sustained criticism of television with any intellectual force to it. The *New Yorker,* for example, has tried over and over again to induce gifted writers of one kind or another to address themselves to television and the results have been abortive. One of the reasons for this has to do with something that is endemic to the higher criticism of mass culture, which is that it tends to become simply another mode of the consumption of mass culture. A great many of the intellectuals who wrote in the old days about mass culture in COMMENTARY or *Partisan Review* were really disguising their appetite for it.

Podhoretz: Some of us were bragging about our appetite for it.

Kramer: That was a later development. I think, though, there is something about the serious analysis of mass culture that is extremely difficult to sustain inherently, because in a sense mass cul-

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ture doesn't offer an object for criticism. It offers a *Zeitgeist*, not the kind of object that the critical intelligence is formed to analyze.

Novak: I don't think it is the fault of the mass culture in the case of television. I have come to believe that there are limitations in the medium. That is, there are certain things you cannot do in film, or video, that are terribly important to human relations. These media deal poorly with complicated human involvements and emotions. A novel can disentangle these; they can't be grasped by looking in from the outside, no matter how skillfully. What the camera tends to do is make up with intensity for what it lacks in subtlety and nuance and irony. We spoke about discontinuity. One such discontinuity, in sensibility and in intellectual habit, I have noticed in my university students, whose experience has been formed by television and by movies. There is no way to break through and open them up to the world of literature—or, in my case, the world of philosophy—unless one can locate and define the limitations in their own modes of perception. If you ignore the problem, or are overawed by it—a few years ago this rather new power burst upon us and critics were overawed by its new idiom, and inflated its significance—you cripple yourself from the outset.

Ozick: In other words, you want to use criticism of the visual media as a bridge, as a stepping stone, into literature?

Novak: You have to grasp the limitations of the media if you are going to teach philosophy or literature.

Kramer: So you want a certain kind of intelligence-gathering about the effect of the popular media on the minds of the young.

Novak: No. I simply want sensitive and subtle critics to reflect on the impact of the popular media on *them*.

Kramer: But their criticisms are not going to reach this audience that is being damaged.

Novak: Not in the first place, but we have to begin somewhere and there is not now in existence a protracted criticism of television—I mean, longer than what you get in the daily paper.

Grossman: Isn't *Sesame Street* the most important example of the thing you are talking about? Perhaps it is the most important television show in America. If we are discussing the future of high culture and literacy, we have to take *Sesame Street* and its spin-offs into account. Even in public schools that are not considered advanced or forward-looking, the techniques, not to say mystique, of *Sesame Street* become ubiquitous. Maybe that is not worth crying about. Anyway, nothing could be more elementary, basic, than this fact: letters are supposed to come easy, now. I wonder if the next generations will be able or will even wish to or feel a need to read books that are as tough and hard as the ones we are talking about.

Podhoretz: I have to reverse ground here. The facts of the case, once again, are that far from resulting in a decline in reading, television is highly correlated with an increase in reading. You can say nobody is appreciating or understanding what he reads, but the predictions that people would read less as a result of being brought up on television are proving to be false. More books are bought, and presumably read, than before television came on the scene—all kinds of books. Moreover, books are now available in places in America that used to be innocent of their presence. If there were any conclusion to be drawn from the effect of television on literacy, it would be that television has increased literacy and increased the appetite for books, not the other way around. I can testify to this personally as a parent who has raised several children in the age of television.

In general, the apocalyptic views of the effects of television seem to me highly exaggerated. What television has done, however, has been to make us one culture, one country, for the first time. Neither radio nor the movies could effectively unite the country, but now everybody is more or less aware of the same things at the same time. This has had profound political consequences, in setting the agenda of important problems. It has undoubtedly also had profound cultural consequences, in the transmission of attitudes, ways of life, and values. It is no accident that the media have become such a major issue. Spiro Agnew did not invent that issue, it arose because in fact something new has happened: there are no quarantined communities or protected enclaves any longer. Everybody now lives in the same country.

This situation poses interesting questions for Hilton Kramer's notion of an intellectual priesthood.

Novak: One thing we weren't quite prepared for was the degree to which the "intellectual priesthood" itself would be affected by the media. Just a few years ago, at the height of the countercultural frenzy, one of the things that made it very difficult to speak up for standards or discipline was the build-up of the counterculture in the national media. What was reported on the news was in fact the attitudes of a minority of students at a minority of institutions, yet it was presented as a massive cultural phenomenon, which it then indeed did become. The attention of the media changed the picture of the phenomenon. And movies like *Bonnie and Clyde*, *Easy*

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Rider, and *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* exalted—or seemed to exalt—a regnant antinomian style. The legitimating power of the media was such that at many universities if you took certain positions you would be virtually ostracized, your arguments would meet sneers and the kind of ridicule that is accorded views contrary to what "everybody" knows, or what is "commonly agreed." Students were deeply affected—felt they *ought* to be affected.

Kramer: This seems to me the same kind of intellectual abdication we talked about earlier. I don't think it really differed all that much in the pre-television era, when it took a great deal of courage in some academic and many intellectual quarters to take an anti-Stalinist position. Television may have intensified the degree of the conformity, but I don't see it as a difference in kind.

Richardson: Critics who could be persuaded by what they saw on television into abandoning their points of view must have been very, very sheltered souls, because that sort of onslaught comes with the job, and the history of it is long and poignant.

Novak: We were speaking earlier of a massive cowardice, or failure of nerve.

Richardson: I still don't believe that happened. I don't believe this was like the Weimar professors.

Podhoretz: Maybe it wasn't Weimar, but the fact remains that people, many people, refrained from saying what they thought, making judgments out loud that they were actually making in their hearts, and they refrained for fear of being called names, for fear of incurring the anger of their colleagues, friends, students. They kept quiet when they should have spoken out. I don't know why we shouldn't make moral judgments of intellectuals just as we do of everyone else.

Kramer: There was an extraordinary development in the New York art world in the 60's, when the then director of the Museum of Modern Art, John Hightower, publicly advocated the establishment of a special wing for black art. The number of serious critics, artists, and art historians who raised their voices against this preposterous notion was very small, and there was a reason for it, because those few who did protest, among whom I am proud to count myself, were being widely and viciously abused for their views. The whole thing in addition was one of those cynical maneuvers designed to keep pickets away from the museum; there was never the slightest intention to deliver on it, and there was no substance to the idea, yet it was an idea publicly advocated by the director of the most important museum of its kind in the world. This represented a genuine betrayal of intellectual values.

Richardson: Are you suggesting that black art is not worth showing?

Kramer: I am not. I am suggesting that if it is worth showing, it is worth showing as art, not as black art. There is no wing in the Museum of Modern Art for French art, or German art, or male art, or female art, or any other kind of art based on any kind of ethnic, sexual, or political discrimination.

Richardson: If this is an example of critical cowardice, I find it a weak one.

Kramer: I don't think it is a weak one. I can tell you that virtually every serious art critic in New York found this idea preposterous, yet very, very few were willing to raise their voices against it, and if that isn't a definition of intellectual cowardice—when you believe something to be without intellectual substance and yet you refuse to raise your voice out of fear of offending prevailing political pieties—then what is cowardice?

Richardson: In that case you're right. I would just like to document the presumption that these critics did feel it was preposterous with absolute certainty. When one talks of any critical act of this nature, one has to feel that some violation of principle is being invoked.

Kramer: There was such a violation.

Ozick: Isn't Mailer's *The Faith of Graffiti* an instance of cowardice of this kind?

Kramer: No, I think it is an expression of poor taste.

Ozick: I see it as a celebration of symbolic violence—a raised fist in the guise of an aesthetic investigation. After all, it might very properly have been called "The Faith of Vandalism."

Podhoretz: A better example would be the craven response of the literary-intellectual world to McGraw-Hill's new index of prohibited terminology in describing men and women. That seems to offer a clear instance of cowardice.

Kramer: Thus conscience doth make cowards of us all?

Podhoretz: J. Dover Wilson instructs us that in this case "conscience" means "consciousness"—and there, perhaps, you have a small example of the enduring pertinence of high culture and critical sensibility, and even of old-fashioned literary scholarship, to the contemporary scene.

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The Greening of Judaism

Marshall Sklare

SELDOM does the appearance of a book become a major public event, and rarer still is the book that can be singled out as marking a turning point of any kind in public experience; but this, within the world of American Jewry, has been the happy fate of a 319-page volume entitled *The Jewish Catalog: A Do-It Yourself Kit*,* a book which within a few months of its publication in 1973 was already being referred to as a classic. The instant recognition accorded to *The Jewish Catalog* by the American Jewish community has been matched by a phenomenal sales record for a work which devotes itself entirely to the question of how to live a Jewish life, and which was published by a house with a well-earned reputation for the seriousness of its titles. As of last July, 95,000 copies of the *Catalog* were in print and a sixth printing had been ordered. In Jewish publishing, this is best-sellerdom with a vengeance.

I

IN PHYSICAL appearance *The Jewish Catalog* bears a close resemblance to two of its models, both of them quintessential products of the counterculture of the late 60's, *Living on the Earth* by Alicia Bay Laurel and the famous *Whole Earth Catalog*†: it is a large-format paperbound work featuring a carefully contrived design and typography, with diagrams, line drawings, and photographs freely interspersed in the text. And like its models, too, *The Jewish Catalog* aims to provide practical information of a self-help nature: in this case, on how to live as a Jew. As the two original conceivers of the *Catalog* have put it:

> Like the *Whole Earth Catalog* we wish to be a clearing house for ideas, materials, and personal resources, if not as an actual catalogue store, then at the very least in a "where-to-get-hold-of-it" way. We also want, in many cases, to be a "how-to" book as well. . . . For certain topics which we deem important or desirable to describe, we will include more than a simple mention of the tool and where to get hold of it, but in addition present a recipe, or a blueprint, or instructions to enable a person to do certain things right from the book. . . .**

In line with these principles, the *Catalog* is organized into four sections: "Space," "Time," "Word," and "Man/Woman." The first section opens with "Symbols of the Home," a chapter largely concerned with the history, significance, and laws relating to *mezuza*, the small reticule containing parchment inscribed with verses from Deuteronomy that observant Jews affix to doorposts of the home. The chapter includes detailed instructions on how one can make these objects for oneself rather than purchasing them. This is followed by a chapter on "Kashrut: Food, Eating, and Wine-Making," which has material on setting up a kosher home and an extensive recipe section with directions for preparing *cholent, tzimmes, felafel, houmos*, gefilte fish, matzah balls, *kreplach*, cabbage rolls, and chicken soup. Next comes an entire chapter on "Hallah," followed by "Candles and Candle-Making," "Kippah" (largely devoted to the art of crocheting skullcaps), "Tallit" (with particular attention to the tying of ritual fringes and with instructions for making your own *tallit*, or prayershawl), "Tefillin," "Shofar" (here too the emphasis is on how to make your own), "Lulav and Esrog," and, finally, "Jewish Travel."

The second section of the *Catalog*, "Time," begins with a chapter on the Jewish calendar and includes detailed instructions on the blessing of the new moon. This is followed by a chapter on the Sabbath, with directions for the proper observance of the day. Then comes "The Festivals: Some Home Customs and Rituals," featuring

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* Compiled and edited by Richard Siegel, Michael Strassfeld, and Sharon Strassfeld, Jewish Publication Society of America, 319 pp., $5.50.

† See Sonya Rudikoff, "The Whole Earth People," COMMENTARY, July 1972, for a description of these books and an analysis of the culture they represent.

** "The Jewish Whole Earth Catalog: Theory and Development," by George Savran and Richard Siegel, Unpublished Master's Essay, Graduate Center for Contemporary Jewish Studies, Brandeis University, 1972.

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material on the building of a *sukkah*, the construction of a *dreidel*, a *menorah*, and a *grager*, and the baking of matzah. "Berakhot" tells you what blessings to pronounce upon eating, or upon performing given precepts, or when petitioning or expressing gratitude to God. In "Weddings," a description of marriage laws and customs takes the reader from the highly traditional to the highly innovative, and in "Tumah and Taharah —Mikveh," a detailed analysis of traditional laws relating to ritual pollution and uncleanliness is accompanied by a description of the actual rites of purification. The section on "Time" concludes with "Death and Burial."

The third section, "Word," covers "Scribal Arts" (a treatise on the making of Hebrew letters and a guide to Hebrew calligraphy, with the aim of enabling the reader to prepare his own Hebrew documents, especially the marriage certificate, or *ketubah*); "Gematria"; "Music," particularly the hasidic variety; "Film"; "The Jewish Press and Periodicals"; and, finally, "Creating a Jewish Library," a lengthy and sophisticated bibliography of adult books and children's books, a listing of Jewish bookstores, and instructions on collecting a well-rounded personal library of Judaica.

The "Man/Woman" section of the *Catalog*, something of a hodgepodge, begins with a chapter entitled "How to Bring Mashiah [Messiah]," followed by "A Guide to Jewish Women's Activities," and "Using the Jewish Establishment—A Reluctant Guide," the latter being a listing of local and national Jewish organizations and institutions from which various kinds of assistance may be obtained and a subject guide to resources offered by Jewish organizations. Then come chapters on "Hakhnasat Orchim—Hospitality" and on "Communities." "Where to Learn in Your Ghetto" has a list of American universities offering eight or more courses in Jewish studies, as well as of seminaries, *yeshivot*, and Hebrew colleges. "Teachers" offers the names of Hillel directors, a number of hasidic *rebbaim*, some professors of Jewish studies, some Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform rabbis who hold pulpits, and individuals who function as unofficial spiritual leaders to the Jewish young. The *Catalog* ends with a chapter entitled "A First Step: A Devotional Guide," stressing meditation and prayer and closing with the novel formula: "May His blessed Name be with you until you get to Him."

Even such a cursory rundown as this of the *Catalog*'s thirty-one chapters will give some idea of the scope of the editors' concerns and of the curious amalgam they have effected between the detailed exposition of Jewish law, on the one hand, and the ethos of the "Whole Earth" movement, on the other, with its stress on the nonconforming and the homemade. So unexpected does this amalgam seem that the *Catalog* has been taken as representing something new on the American Jewish scene. Yet the fact is that the *Catalog* did not spring full-blown from the minds of the young people who conceived it. They themselves came out of a particular social-religious milieu within American Jewry and the *Catalog* is saturated with the attitudes and values of that milieu. It is a milieu whose "feel" is captured perfectly in the photograph which covers the end papers at the front and back of the *Catalog*, depicting a group doing an Israeli dance. A young man who catches our eye is sporting a skullcap, a girl nearby is wearing a sweatshirt imprinted with a large peace symbol and the word "Peace" underneath. The credits indicate that the "National Ramah Commission, Camp Ramah, Wisconsin" is responsible for the photo. To understand *The Jewish Catalog*, one has to know something about Ramah.

II

RAMAH came into existence in 1947 at the initiative of Rabbi Ralph Simon of Chicago, who envisioned it as the key to the survival of Conservative Judaism as a movement. The existing leadership of Conservatism had been reared in Orthodoxy, but it was clear that the next generation would have to come from the ranks of Conservatism itself. Ramah would address this situation by developing an indigenous Conservative leadership, and it would do so outside the traditional educational apparatus of the Conservative movement.* From the beginning Ramah had the backing of the Teachers Institute of the Jewish Theological Seminary, whose faculty saw the informal setting as a powerful tool for creating emotional commitments, furthering learning, and strengthening personal relationships that could later be transformed into institutional, religious, and ethnic loyalties.†

During its first year the pilot camp in the woods of northern Wisconsin was attended by a total of 89 youngsters, almost all of them from the Midwest (some staff members came from the East and were students at the Seminary). Thereafter the growth of Ramah was spectacular—several times in the succeeding years Ramah was so flooded with applicants that it could not build or purchase needed physical facilities rapidly enough. By 1970 Ramah included a network of seven camps in which 2,833 youngsters were enrolled, plus a program in Israel in which an additional 350 were registered; staff numbered 1,321, with another sizable group attending a training program from which future staff would be recruited.

Several camps stressing Jewish culture or the

* See Marshall Sklare, *Conservative Judaism: An American Religious Movement* (Schocken, 1972), p. 259.

† On Ramah, see Stephen C. Lerner, "Ramah and Its Critics," *Conservative Judaism*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (Spring 1971), pp. 1-28.

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Hebrew language existed before Ramah, among them the Massad camps and the largest Jewish camp in the nation, Cejwin (located in Port Jervis, New York). But none managed to establish quite the reputation Ramah did for combining intellectual seriousness and Jewish commitment with just the right admixture of flexibility to temper these with the latest fashions in the progressive liberal culture. On the intellectual front, each Ramah had a "professor-in-residence"—generally a member of the faculty of the Seminary—and a large number of instructors in Hebrew, classical texts, and Jewish culture. Every camp also had a library featuring standard Jewish texts and reference materials. Drawing its clientele from the newly affluent, suburban congregations of the Conservative movement, Ramah regarded itself as the Ivy League of summer camps, and in fact developed a kind of elitist view of its role in training a new generation of leaders.

Ramah's sense of self-assurance, bolstered by its success in drawing ever-increasing numbers of campers, was no doubt a factor in the camps' atmosphere of openness toward new trends in middle-class life, from the 50's craze for folk-singing to the 60's craze for blue jeans and beards. Given the proclivity of Conservative Judaism to reject or disregard those aspects of Jewish law or custom it finds unacceptable, there were few developments in the past decades in the realm of personal behavior which Ramah felt it necessary, doctrinally, to dismiss outright. In most cases it was able to turn all such potentially challenging developments to its own purposes, even claiming authentic Jewish precedent for them. And the process worked in the opposite direction as well, as Ramah demonstrated an unerring ability to utilize age-old Jewish symbols and practices in a way that gave them an "anti-establishment" tone.

A seemingly insignificant and perhaps amusing example of this is the use made of the *kippah*, or skullcap. According to the etiquette of Conservative Judaism, which demands the striking of a compromise between the exigencies of religious custom and the accepted practices of "polite" society, a male should have a *kippah* in his pocket to be available for prayer, for saying a blessing, or for studying sacred texts. Some Ramah campers, however, began to wear a *kippah* at all times, causing their parents, and a number of leading Conservative rabbis, definite embarrassment. The wearing of the *kippah* was a kind of provocation, directed against the "uptight" Jewish establishment with its excessive fear of seeming out of place in American life, or too "different," and the provocation was compounded by the fact that the Ramah *kippah* came in a variety of colors and patterns—anything but the standard demure black or navy. Most desirable of all was a hand-crocheted *kippah* produced at camp itself, preferably by a girl friend who would work the Hebrew name of the intended recipient into the design. Similarly with the Ramah *tallit*, huge in size compared to the standard Conservative prayershawl, its material a symphony of bold colors and abstract designs.

Perhaps the major thrust of the Ramah "experience," as its participants liked to call it, was to instill in all concerned—campers, faculty, and staff—a sense of the sufficiency of that experience as a paradigm of Jewish life (and hence indirectly to call into question any other mode). Early in the history of Ramah it was recognized that the camps were performing as important a service for the staff as for the campers. The ideal was to become part of the Ramah family—every camper graduating to a staff position, and thus helping further to complete the closed circle. One reason for the large size of Ramah's staff was this emphasis on being part of a family—a family which had a regular reunion every summer.

Within the Conservative movement a continuing discussion took place over the years as to whether Rabbi Simon's ambitions for Ramah were being realized. Was Ramah providing the synagogues with an indigenous leadership, or was it separating itself from the movement and cultivating a feeling of alienation from, and superiority toward, the local synagogues among its campers and staff? Ramah administrators did not encourage inquiry into this question, pointing rather to the undeniable fact that many of the students at the Jewish Theological Seminary were alumni of Ramah, and that the Jewish literacy of young people who had spent a few summers at Ramah exceeded anything the Conservative movement had been able to produce elsewhere. Still, the question lingered in the air, and then gained added urgency in 1969, when the fragile mixture of elements that was Ramah's way-of-life suddenly became volatile.

The scene of the "explosion" was the Ramah camp in Palmer, Massachusetts, situated within easy driving distance of Harvard Square, the east-coast center of American youth culture. Although to this day there is controversy over what actually occurred at Palmer,* the presence of marijuana was obviously of central importance. Campers absented themselves from daily services, and the cutting of classes was common; there were charges that the observance of *kashrut* was lax. A time-honored Ramah tradition—the presentation in Hebrew of a successful Broadway musical—was also observed in peculiar fashion, with older campers selecting *Hair* and then proceeding to present it in English. Just before the 1971 camp season it was announced that Palmer would be closed for the summer. Some blamed poor registration, but this—the first closing in Ramah's history—was widely interpreted as a sign that eclecticism had its limits.

* See Sklare, *op. cit.*, pp. 279-81.

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III

SO POWERFUL was the Ramah experience in the lives of young Jews that many a camper must have wished that a means existed for transferring that experience to, and making it encompass, all of his life—to be in camp all year 'round, as it were. The commune movement of the 60's provided the sought-for means. In the mid-60's groups of young Jews, frequently led by Ramah alumni, and influenced by the communal ideal in the counterculture, came together on college campuses to set up communal housekeeping *cum* Jewish living and study. The *havurot*, as they came to be called (from the Hebrew for "fellowship"), were joined by Orthodox and Reform young people—Orthodox students who found themselves out of sympathy with Orthodoxy's political conservatism and hostility to the counterculture, and Reform students who wanted to be more Jewish than the Reform norm and less politically active (the decline of political activism was a potent factor in the growth of the *havurot*, as of communes in general). And the *havurot* were also joined by students from non-religious homes whose latent ethnic loyalties had been brought to the surface by the anti-Israel position of the New Left, the rejection by blacks of Jewish participation in the civil-rights movement, the new emphasis on pluralism, and the burgeoning Jewish Studies programs. But the core of the *havurot* remained young Jews from the Conservative movement, and the core of the core were graduates of Ramah.

The Jewish Catalog is a product of the havurah that is located in the Boston area, named Havurat Shalom. The editors, in fact, dedicate the *Catalog* to their *havurah*, which they see as the source of their strength and inspiration. They describe Havurat Shalom as the " '*alter zadeh*' of the Jewish commune movement . . . a community of people who study, pray, retreat, fight, talk, sing, dance, and love each other." And the *Catalog* opens with a full-page photo of Havurat Shalom's sanctuary (it is empty). This sanctuary is unlike any standard American synagogue, for while it has an ark and an eternal light, we do not see a reader's desk or a platform and pulpit. Even more startling is the absence of pews or benches—the floor is bare except for a liberal scattering of large pillows. To the typical American Jewish worshipper the scene must look bizarre—he associates sitting on the floor or a low place with mourning and death. But this is not how the members of Havurat Shalom feel. For them sitting on the floor is good because it is the way man sat before civilization imposed its constraints upon him.

Like the photograph of the group doing an Israeli dance at Camp Ramah, the photograph of the sanctuary at Havurat Shalom conveys a particularly good sense not only of the mix of elements that is the *Catalog*, but of the relative weight the *Catalog* assigns to the various components in that mix. The biases and emphases of the *Catalog*, in other words, reflect its lineage with the utmost fidelity.

The attitude of the *Catalog*'s editors to Jewish religious law, or *halacha*, is the first and most obvious case in point. The regulation of the everyday life of the individual Jew, with a view toward enhancing the spiritual dimension and infusing it with meaning, has been the intent of every code of Jewish law from the Mishnah in the 2nd century, to Maimonides's great 12th-century code, the *Mishneh Torah*, to the *Shulkhan Aruch* of the 16th century, to such current handbooks as Hayim H. Donin's *To Be a Jew*.* In that respect *The Jewish Catalog* follows in a long and venerable tradition, and its editors do not hesitate to lay claim to a link of honor in this historical chain.

At the same time, however, the editors exempt themselves from the central feature of Jewish religious law—its normativeness. According to Savran and Siegel, in the Master's Essay cited above, "The *halacha* is there to inform and set guidelines, to raise questions, to offer solutions, to provide inspiration—but not to dictate behavior." What they see in the *halacha*, instead, is the beauty of an ancient and primitive, *therefore* uniquely valuable, body of thought. "Because of its age, origins, and the traditions and mysteries surrounding it, Torah has assumed forms which are timeless and powerfully evocative—elements which are missing from contemporary life. As Tillich says, we are living in a time of broken myths."

The value of Jewish religious law, then, aside from its innate "mystery," lies in the uses to which it can be put in an age beset with rampant "alienation," a time of "broken myths." These uses are not limitless, the creators of the *Catalog* realize; indeed, they are quick to criticize the incompleteness of *halacha*, its weakness in the area of "political and social involvement," and the absence in Judaism as traditionally practiced of ". . . song, dance, crafts, drama, poetry, folktale, legend. . . . It has taken the 'discovery' of these values by the contemporary culture to raise the full conscious awareness of their existence within Judaism." One such new awareness, the *Catalog* says, attaches to the *shofar*:

> Certainly one of the strangest pieces of ritual paraphernalia is the *shofar*. Even though there are several other religious objects that never seem to lose their potential for surprising and amazing people, in some ways the *shofar* still stands alone. The smoothly curved ram's horn has an aura of the primitive about it; for people saturated with sophisticated technology, the *shofar* appears to be a throwback to hoary an-

* Basic Books, 336 pp., $10.00.

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tiquity. And perhaps this is precisely why the *shofar* is so exciting and stirring—it brings us back to places inside ourselves that are very basic and primitive, very near the root of our being. Since the *shofar* is used mainly around the time of the year when it is most important to be in touch with ourselves, finding those places is crucial.

Here, and in many similar passages, the editors reveal the indebtedness of the *Catalog*—an indebtedness they are the last to deny, although they do not appear to recognize just how pervasive, and ultimately compromising, it is—to the regnant pieties of American youth culture. This indebtedness extends from the kinds of language they use to the principles of selection they have followed, the emphasis they consistently place on the primitive and ritualistic as opposed to the abstract and intellectual, their stress on folk religion and on the mystical and the occult, and their preoccupation with handicrafts and cookery, which they justify with appeals to "art," on the one hand, and criticisms of the "impersonal, sterile, and alienating aspects of modern urban life" on the other. According to Savran and Siegel:

> The *Catalog* addresses itself toward a rounding-out of Jewish experience, bringing back the physically oriented side of Tradition and life that has been relegated to a few specialists. Basic areas of Jewish life like Bar Mitzvah, Weddings, and Burials have become so "prefabricated" as to alienate those with any real feeling for the event being celebrated. The individual must physically involve himself in the symbols and structures of Traditional Judaism in such a way that he feels a personal meaning. . . .

Thus, in most areas of life discussed within the pages of the *Catalog*, the relevant Jewish law is scrupulously reported, where applicable. But the dominant stress quickly shifts to the experiential side of the subject in question, the side connected with issues of personal style, of taste, of aesthetic pleasure. Indeed, if there is a single characteristic of Jewish life to which, in the "mind" of the *Catalog*, all others are subordinated, it is not the broadly metaphysical or philosophical (God does not figure largely in these pages), not the ethical or the social (society can hardly be said to exist for the editors, except as a machine of oppression), not even the devotional, properly speaking (there is a great deal of material on the accoutrements of prayer, significantly less on prayer itself), but the aesthetic. As the editors of the *Catalog* put it, in explaining this focus:

> The tolerance for impersonal, "professional," alienated services is diminishing. Instead, more and more people are making their own clothes, fixing their own cars, cutting their own hair, creating their own toys, growing their own food, building their own houses, planning their own vacations. The personal response to the environment has been a component of Jewish life for centuries. The craftsman, though generally poor, was accorded considerable respect if not status. . . . Art had no independent realm. It existed in embroidery, illumination, scroll work, construction, filigree. Cooking, of course, was an art of its own contained within the private confines of the home. Similarly for study, music, and dance. It is these aspects which must be re-evaluated in the light of present developments and raised to the level of articulation. . . .

Hence, the *Catalog* devotes an entire section to wine-making. Hence too it is contemptuous of such innovations as the Meal Mart chain of kosher prepared-food stores which are so heavily patronized in Brooklyn, where many Orthodox housewives find it necessary to work to supplement their husbands' earnings and so cannot spend the time at home necessary for the preparation of Sabbath dishes; for the *Catalog* the only Sabbath worthy of the name is one which includes homemade *hallah* and cake, as well as homemade wine, homemade chicken soup, homemade gefilte fish, homemade *cholent*, homemade *kugel*, homemade *tzimmes*, and homemade *kreplach*. And it goes without saying that if the *Catalog* recommends a strict regimen of home-cooked dishes it is even more insistent on the lighting of homemade candles. The *Catalog* is in fact infatuated with candle-making, devoting an entire chapter to the subject and expressing its regret that Judaism has no daily ritual requiring the lighting of tapers and so few occasions that call for really substantial amounts of wax.

THERE are moments, however, when the *Catalog* seems not merely indebted to the youth culture in its interpretations of Judaism, but subordinate to it. A small but revealing example is the *Catalog*'s treatment of one of Judaism's sacred symbols, the eternal light that is placed in the synagogue above the Holy Ark, in commemoration of a Scriptural directive to the children of Israel to cause a lamp to burn continuously in the tabernacle. After duly discussing its function in the synagogue, the *Catalog* comes up with something entirely new, a use for the eternal light in the home. According to the *Catalog*, "It is not inappropriate to set up a *ner tamid* [eternal light] in your house—to be used for times of prayer and meditation, for *Shabbat* and *yom tov* or for all times as a continual reminder of God's presence." One is touched by this pietistic gesture, but it soon becomes clear that what is wanted here is simply a light show, after all: "[attach] to each section one of a string of variously colored lights on a random-flashing sequence chain. Make sure to insulate against electrical fires."

Another example of the sacrifice of the normative to the aesthetic is the *Catalog*'s meticulously detailed instructions for the baking of Passover

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matzah at home. An oven used for this purpose must be able to reach a temperature of 2000-2500 degrees Fahrenheit—unheard of in a home oven. The editors are aware that unleavened bread prepared in the home according to the *Catalog*'s instructions would in fact be leavened bread in the eyes of Jewish law. However, from the *Catalog*'s standpoint the important thing is that those participating in the preparation would presumably have had the experience of reliving a primal event in the history of their people.

Subordination to the youth culture can take more serious forms in the *Catalog* as well. Here, for example, is what the *Catalog* says about the *mikveh* or ritual bath:

> [The *mikveh*] simulates the original living water, the primal sea from which all life comes, the womb of the world, the amniotic tide on which the unborn child is rocked. To be reborn, one must re-enter this womb and "drown" in living water. . . . We emerge from the *mikveh tahor* [pure], having confronted our own death and resurrection.

Actually, however, the purpose of the *mikveh* in Jewish life is not to force a confrontation with death and resurrection. The concept of *mikveh* has evolved over the ages; in contemporary life *mikveh* is centered on the question of the promotion of family purity. Yet about this the *Catalog* has relatively little to say.

Its downplaying of the family points to the most telling distortion of all—the fact that the *Catalog* has almost nothing to say about the entire social and ethical dimension of Judaism in general, what is referred to traditionally as the "commandments between man and his fellow man." In *To Be a Jew*, which represents the traditional conception of Judaism, Rabbi Donin makes this subject a cornerstone of his discussion of the Jewish way of life, in a chapter entitled "Kindness: A Means and an End," which he subdivides into "Acts of Kindness"; "Laws of Charity"; "Laws Relating to Slander, Revenge, and Deceit"; "Laws Pertaining to Work and Wages"; "Kindness to Animals"; and "Acts of Justice."

For Rabbi Donin, Jewish life without this dimension is totally unimaginable, and he gives it the kind of attention that *The Jewish Catalog* devotes only to such matters as the manufacture of wine, candles, and skullcaps. And not only is the *Catalog* weak in the area of human relations, when it does treat of this topic the emphasis throughout is on what the individual can get rather than give. Thus, the *Catalog* offers advice on how to live cheaply in Israel by deceiving and otherwise "ripping off" naive Israeli residents. In "Using the Jewish Establishment—A Reluctant Guide," it lists the available resources of the organized American Jewish community and gives suggestions for obtaining scholarships, fellowships, free medical and psychiatric care, interest-free loans, and the like, without a word on a reciprocal obligation to contribute to the life of one's fellow Jews.*

IV

In sum, the *Catalog* is rich in ironies, a work in which a genuine familiarity with Jewish sources and Jewish practice has been put at the service of the latest cultural and aesthetic predilections, with results that are funny, vulgar, charming, and meretricious all at once. And by no means the smallest irony is the wholehearted approval the *Catalog* has won from the very Jewish "establishment" it affects to reject.

Throughout the 50's and 60's Jewish leaders, lay and rabbinic, had agonized over the "alienation" of the young, their seemingly inevitable assimilation to secular American society, and their ready acceptance of intermarriage. The New Left, the counterculture, drugs, Eastern mysticism—all seemed to combine among the college-age generation of Jews and to promise further erosion in their loyalty to the Jewish community. In the words of Rabbi Irving Greenberg, an Orthodox leader who made something of a specialty of the issue, writing in 1968: "All of the studies point to one fact. By and large college is a disaster area for Judaism, Jewish loyalty, and Jewish identity."† Fear of what was happening on the campus prompted the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds to establish a "Committee on College Students and Faculty," which sought to increase the availability of money for work on the campus. But there was little optimism about the results of such investment: alienation was seen as running rampant, and political and cultural radicalism was believed to have made particularly serious inroads in the ranks of Jewish students.

Given this situation, it is not so surprising that the publication of a document like *The Jewish Catalog* should have met with overwhelming delight among the leaders of the American Jewish community. The appearance of the *Catalog*—it was felt—showed that everyone's worst fears had not been realized: Jewish youth had not turned its back on its heritage after all. Jewish youth was not assimilating; on the contrary, Jewish youth was becoming fervently observant, albeit in a new style, congruent with the age. Indeed, the countercultural style of the *Catalog* only seemed to endear it further to the heart of the "establishment." For here, it was said, were young people who were as "with it" as anyone could wish, and who yet were consumed with a love for things Jewish. (Some even intimated that it was all too

* An apparent exception to the rule is the chapter entitled "Hospitality," but this, it turns out, was written not by a student but by the oldest contributor to the *Catalog*, Rabbi Richard J. Israel, director of the Hillel Foundations of Greater Boston.

† "Jewish Survival and the College Campus," *Judaism*, Vol. 17, No. 4 (Fall 1968), pp. 259-81.

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good to be true; the Jewish community really did not deserve such wonderful young people—a judgment in which the creators of the *Catalog* heartily concur.)

Rabbi Greenberg's reaction was typical. In a review written jointly with his wife Blu, he noted a few errors in the interpretation of Jewish law and listed several suggestions for a revised edition, but went on to say that "everything [in the *Catalog*] is presented with great charm, saving humor, and a very human dimension." According to the Greenbergs, "One of the most heartening phenomena on the North American scene during the past few years has been the resurgence of interest by Jews in living Jewishly," a resurgence exemplified by the *Catalog*. Their return to Judaism has come none too soon, ". . . for Jewish life is being swiftly flattened between the hammer of the open society and the anvil of vacuity in much of organized Jewish life."*

As we have seen, the reality is rather more interesting than what the Greenbergs construe it to be. There has been no "resurgence of interest" in the sense they suggest simply because, in the segment of American Jewry for which the *Catalog* speaks, interest never waned; one need only examine the application figures for Camp Ramah to confirm this observation. Nor is it correct to regard the young people associated with the *Catalog* as existing somehow outside of, or apart from, "organized Jewish life." For it was organized Jewish life—specifically, one highly organized part of it within the Conservative movement—that was responsible for their education and that, on the evidence of *The Jewish Catalog*, clearly succeeded in instilling in them its salient values, including its sense of the elasticity of Jewish tradition in adapting to contemporary styles of experience and its attitude of superiority toward the conventional institutional forms of American Jewish life; as is always the case with the young, the *Catalog* merely takes these attitudes to their logical extreme. And finally, if there is "vacuity" in American Jewry, it too is reflected, in appropriately up-to-date form, in the very pages of *The Jewish Catalog* itself.

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* "Do-It-Yourself Judaism: *The Jewish Catalog*," *Hadassah Magazine*, May 1974, pp. 14-15, 37.

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Feminist Fiction

Jane Larkin Crain

Unlike older forms of "woman's fiction," written not only by and about but primarily for women, a new kind of woman's novel that has been appearing with increasing frequency in recent years, avowedly "feminist" in orientation, has aspired to and won a place for itself in the literary mainstream. These novels, executed in different styles and with varying degrees of success, have an essential quality in common: all are investigations of the life of a single heroine who is portrayed as "representative" of her sex, and whose experiences are meant to illuminate the shared lot of women in a society shaped and controlled by men.

Published in 1967, Sue Kaufman's *Diary of a Mad Housewife* was among the first, and remains among the most popular, of the new feminist novels. Like her most recent novel, *Falling Bodies,* it is set in neurotic, upper-middle-class Manhattan—a literary landscape that by now must seem home territory to readers of contemporary American fiction. Mrs. Kaufman's novels cast a censorious eye on what is meant to seem the deadly farce of life in affluent, professional, urban America; with an air of the exposé, they tell tales of what really goes on behind the well-groomed façades of Central Park West and the upper East Side, zeroing in especially on the conventions of marriage and family—institutions over which Mrs. Kaufman seems finally to throw up her hands in despair.

Marriage, indeed, is the subject of most feminist novels. It is anguished over in Anne Roiphe's *Up the Sandbox!* (1970); deplored in Lois Gould's *Such Good Friends* (1970) and Alix Kates Shulman's *Memoirs of an Ex-Prom Queen* (1972); and repeatedly railed against in Erica Jong's *Fear of Flying* (1973). In all these novels the institution is shown to be calamitous in and of itself, and also symptomatic of the allegedly life-negating absurdities of the entire American condition. The characters chosen to illustrate and exemplify this vision are female versions of the routine loser-heroes of contemporary fiction; Bruce Jay Friedman's Harry Towns, Philip Roth's Alexander Portnoy, and now Joseph Heller's Bob Slocum, find their counterparts here—hopelessly incapacitated heroines who struggle to little avail against the tide of a pathology so all-embracing that it amounts to culture itself.

The tone of the new feminist novels tends toward the strenuously hardbitten and worldly-wise, yet curiously enough their primary concerns are the essence of plain old girl-talk, and the manner in which these concerns are treated is in fact often reminiscent of old-fashioned "women's writing." An example is the singleminded attention to the particularities of housekeeping that can be found nowhere but in the pages of magazines like the *Ladies Home Journal*—and in *Diary of a Mad Housewife* and *Up the Sandbox!* The sorts of things that ladies' magazines have been handling in little articles and short stories for years—the housewife's sundry duties and chores, her sexual and other marital difficulties, her endless labors as a mother, and so forth—have been transferred en masse, and in the same exhaustive, obsessive detail, into the pages of the feminist novel, where they have also and less happily been suffused with an air of thick morbidity. (An exception in this regard is Barbara Raskin's *Loose Ends* [1973], whose best moments, updated and wised-up, are of a piece with the droll domestic comedy of books like *Please Don't Eat the Daisies* or *Cheaper by the Dozen:* wife-and-motherhood as seen by a woman who loves every minute of it.)

Another point of contact between the new feminist novels and the standard conventions of "ladies' fiction" is the one-sided absorption in the woman's point of view, especially when that point of view is one of helplessness. The heroine of Erica Jong's *Fear of Flying,* a work of broader scope and richer texture than some other examples of the genre, is a chatterbox who professes a panicky dependency on men and affects an air of tearful, hand-wringing distress such as would grace the heroine of any dime-store gothic romance. Lois Gould's novels, hailed by critics as "brilliantly bitchy," "tough," and "acerbic," are, in fact, redolent of nothing so much as soap opera. In the melodramatics of marital calamity as told by the all-suffering wife in *Such Good Friends,* the convoluted and deliciously seamy spe-

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cifics of sin, sex, and shattered dreams among the nouveaux riches in *Necessary Objects,* and the touching story of a man and a woman who seek and find the basis for a "meaningful relationship" through transcendence of their sexual differences in *Final Analysis,* Mrs. Gould generates a quantity of sentimentality sufficient to fuel a dozen happy endings for *As the World Turns* or *The Secret Storm.*

Taken one by one, no feminist novel really rewards critical scrutiny—they are all too steeped in ideology to pay the elementary respect to human complexity that good fiction demands. Still, the ideology itself—the world of attitudes and ideas the feminist novel projects—is worth looking into, the more so since the books as a group have not only sold extremely well but have been widely, respectfully, and even enthusiastically reviewed. They have a broad, and not inconsiderable, appeal; they constitute a phenomenon.

As *Diary of a Mad Housewife* opens, Bettina Balser introduces herself as follows:

> What I am and have been since midsummer is paralyzed. What I am is paranoid as a coot. What I am at times is so depressed I can't talk, so low I have to lock myself in the bathroom and run all the faucets to cover the sound of my crying. What I am at other times is so jazzed up with nerves I can't stand still and everything shakes, and I end up either having to take a pill or a quick sneaky shot of vodka—it depends which is available. What I am is suddenly afraid of most everything you could name.

Like Emma Sohier, the protagonist in Mrs. Kaufman's second novel, *Falling Bodies,* Bettina is, for reasons she is unable to name, suffering the symptoms of clinical hysteria and, at the same time, bludgeoning herself with recrimination for being, in the extremity of her distress, increasingly unable to fulfill her myriad duties as wife and mother.

As the narrative unfolds, a number of other similarities between Bettina and Emma emerge. Both women are daily beleaguered with the strains of keeping large Manhattan households: coping with hostile servants, giving elaborate parties, keeping ice buckets filled, getting people in to do the heavy cleaning. Bettina is a graduate of Smith College who once entertained a burning desire to paint, a dream she abandoned in order to marry and have children; Emma, alumna of Radcliffe, who began during her junior year "to think seriously about a literary career as a critic or editor," and who has subsequently taken up social work, now is unable to work at all because she is convalescing from a protracted, undiagnosed nervous disorder.

Both women have suffered a gradual deterioration in the quality of their marriages, and both of their husbands are philanderers. Bettina's husband is a domestic tyrant, Emma's a terrible snob, finicky, fretful, surly, and hypochondriacal. At the end of *Diary of a Mad Housewife,* after a not especially cathartic reconciliation scene, Bettina resolves to recommit herself to the mess her marriage has become, and to settle for trying to live up to the role of "ideal housekeeper." When the reader last sees Emma, her marriage is in a shambles, and she has sunk to new lows in indecisiveness and self-contempt.

Like *Diary of a Mad Housewife* and *Falling Bodies,* Lois Gould's *Such Good Friends* is also largely devoted to an exhaustive cataloging of marital misery, although the gentleman in question, Julie Messinger's husband, spends the novel comatose in a hospital. Julie's complaint is her husband's sexual neglect, which has engendered an extreme reaction in her:

> I took to overeating, masturbation, Dexamyl, charging things at Bloomingdale's, and reading textbooks on abnormal psychology. I trained myself to climb into bed with Krafft-Ebing and a whole Sara Lee fudge ripple pound cake, and I'd rip through both until I'd worked up a nice sado-masochistic fantasy, then go to work with my fingers. After a few months I'd learned to do it even with Richard lying there next to me. I was positive he never knew.

After her husband is hospitalized Julie learns that he has been engaged in regular infidelities for years. His current mistress, in fact, is among Julie's best friends, and during the novel much is made of the two women's attempts to console themselves and each other for the fact that they are both involved with the same man, and that he is, perversely, dying. Still, after he finally does die, Julie concludes that her marriage was after all probably no less and no worse than the institution can offer, and decides that she must rewed.

Isadora Wing, the protagonist of Erica Jong's *Fear of Flying,* is a woman determined to avoid this endless round of dissatisfaction. (On the jacket of the novel Lois Gould expresses her approbation of Isadora: "She'll take you farther from home than you ever dreamed you'd go. And after this book, there may never be a way back.") Isadora is a writer, filled with tremendous energy, imagination, and *joie de vivre.* She has begun to find life with her reticent and methodical husband increasingly unsatisfying, but instead of passively submitting to the tyrannical prohibitions of her superego and of society, she has an affair with a Laingian analyst who tells her that it is time she stopped being afraid of her own impulses and started to enjoy her life:

> I thought of all the cautious good-girl rules I had lived by—the good student, the dutiful daughter, the guilty faithful wife who committed adultery only in her own head—and I decided that for once I was going to be brave and follow my feelings no matter what the consequences.

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She and her lover take off on a bacchanalian junket through Europe, but it is not long before Isadora realizes that she is merely reenacting all her old compulsions to form binding and self-denying relationships with men. In what was meant to be the most liberated action of her life —the decision to leave her husband temporarily— she has merely transferred her "dependency" to another. Then her lover leaves to rejoin his wife and children, and at this point, stranded in Paris, Isadora has a vision of true liberation; she resolves to transcend the standards of femininity which society has instilled in her and cut loose from her dependency on men: "I knew for sure I wasn't going to grovel. But that was all I knew. . . . It was enough."

IF ONE were to make a composite portrait of the modern American woman as she is conceived of by the literary feminists, the fundamental characteristic of her existence would be that she is living out a destiny the terms of which she has herself not been free to define. The heroines in *Diary of a Mad Housewife, Falling Bodies, Such Good Friends,* and *Fear of Flying* drift, trance-like, into marriage, mostly because it has been made to seem by their parents, teachers, friends, and psychiatrists, as well as by the ladies' magazines and sociologists, the only "normal" and proper thing to do. Because they have been brainwashed into thinking so, they expect marriage to be an ascension into a state where all their needs and longings will be satisfied. On the basis of this false expectation, in fact, they may have betrayed and abandoned a high calling or talent, simply in order to become the adjunct of some man.

Once married, these fictional heroines gradually come to realize that they have not, after all, entered an estate of bliss and transcendence. They become discontented, anxious, and frustrated; they have children (because they have been made to feel they "ought" to) who sap their spirit; their husbands grow away from them, treating them more and more like household appliances. Nevertheless, they do not recognize their plight as the inevitable fruit of their "self-renunciation," but take it as a sign of some hideous defect in themselves. In feminist fiction, woman's "fate" is to be caught endlessly in feelings of failure, guilt, and self-hatred, and to blame herself for not being the "ideal woman" which her culture holds up to her and celebrates.

As for the men in these novels, by and large they are thoroughgoing cads—surly brutes who take no interest in their children and refuse to participate in the running of their households; who commit adultery and sexually neglect their own wives; who (a contradiction lurks here) frequently suffer from impotence and contrive to make their wives feel responsible for it; who are preoccupied with their careers to the point of ugly obsession; who make outrageously unreasonable demands and then castigate their cowering, self-abnegating wives for failing to meet them; and who, even in seeming acts of decency, are more often than not condescending and contemptuous.

Male oppression extends to single women (the divorced protagonist of Lois Gould's latest novel, *Final Analysis*) as well as married women, to women blessed with a modicum of "insight" into their condition (Isadora Wing) as well as the most hopelessly benighted Middle American housewife. The agent of subjugation can be a husband, a lover, or a psychiatrist. Minda, one of the secondary characters in *Falling Bodies,* is described as a "poor, quivering, ambulatory wreck continually racked by anxiety spasms," a woman reduced to this state by an "endless parade of shrinks" who have "brainwashed" her into giving up her career as a poet. Similarly, the heroine of *Diary of a Mad Housewife* is forced by her psychiatrist to surrender her career as a painter in order to fulfill what he calls the "passive feminine role." There is a psychiatrist in Lois Gould's *Final Analysis* who informs the heroine that what she "really needs is a man to dominate her." Isadora Wing, in *Fear of Flying,* whose association with psychiatrists seems in one way or another to form the heart of her life's experience, also gets told by doctor after doctor that she has a "feminine role" she must fulfill in order to be healthy. In each of these cases the doctor concerned is not spotlighted for any especially egregious behavior but merely serves as a stand-in for the hideous indifference of male society to the mental well-being of women.

Despite the abominable treatment meted out to them by husbands, lovers, and psychiatrists, the women in feminist novels demonstrate an extraordinary submissiveness in the face of abuse. And here the circle closes, the moral is made clear. They are submissive, the authors indicate, because they have been conditioned to believe that their problems are personal and psychological, whereas in fact they are generic and culturally induced. Their pathological passivity is the result of their victimization by the culture, a structure designed by men for the purpose of keeping women in a state of servitude. It is on account of the culture that they are shot through with depression, anxiety, hostility, hysteria, anger, rebelliousness, narcissism, masochism, self-pity, self-hatred, self-recrimination, guilt, fear of failure, and fear of success. On account of the culture they have been coerced into striking a bargain, sacrificing any real chance for fulfillment on the altar of a spurious security.

WHAT novels do best, imparting particularity and concreteness to universal experience, the feminist novels do not succeed in doing at all. Characters in these books take on one-dimensional shapes more appropriate

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to figures in an allegory, or a burlesque, than a novel. Inevitably, this leads the authors into the paths of contradiction and implausibility. Take, for instance, the argument that all of history is engaged in a conspiracy to make women marry, and that marriage is an institution created and perpetuated by men for their own comfort and convenience. In fact, the men in these novels do not derive the least trace of either comfort or convenience from their marriages. They take no joy in their children; they spurn the sexual favors of their wives; they are testy and grouchy about the way their households are run. They desire passive and dependent women, it is claimed, yet they chaff under their wives' neediness, and hold them in contempt for it. They supposedly harbor an inveterate disdain for women and never have anything but their own benefit in mind, yet they toil ceaselessly to provide luxurious apartments, servants, private schools, and European vacations.

In *Fear of Flying,* Isadora Wing claims to have endured for five years, in mute misery, a situation in which her husband "never said he loved her," said "he didn't know if he wanted to be married to her," told her "he had no empathy for her problems," tormented her with his silences and depressions, and forced her, "whenever any kind of closeness threatened," to go to a psychiatrist. This, in a woman who never did anything in her life but what she wanted to do (as we learn through the novel's numerous flashbacks to her past), is an unstoppable talker, and has energy to burn, is so improbable as to be ridiculous. In the same way, the heroines in *Diary of a Mad Housewife, Falling Bodies,* and *Such Good Friends* passively bear indignities that finally tax the credulity of the most willingly suspended disbelief. Nowhere but in one of these novels would a woman put up with a husband who, seized by a "fit of violent rage," causes her to "shake with cold fright," to "feel that awful creeping paralytic ache"—and all because he has "caught" one of his children playing in his favorite chair!

Is it reasonable to suppose that affluent, sophisticated, and intelligent women, in themselves blameless, would suffer in silence such grotesque domestic unpleasantness? Or that they would then, seeking relief, pay good money to a buffoonish quack disguised as a psychiatrist, whose business is to make his patients crazy rather than well? Is it reasonable to suppose that if this were what psychiatrists did there would be any still practicing today? And where, after enduring what they endure, do these women ever get the energy to pursue the full, active, prosperous lives they so obviously do?

The women in feminist novels suffer intensely but for no apparent reason. No connection exists —none can be acknowledged—between outer and inner experience, between the situations these women are in and the decisions they have made in their lives to land themselves in exactly those situations. The inclination to construct reality in such a way as to leave the individual forever caught in the grip of forces that swamp and transcend him, robs personal experience of any texture or substance; denying the operation of both volition and consequence, the writer falsifies reality irrevocably.

THERE are rewards to such an enterprise of falsification. One can read these books and respond immediately to their evocation of "feeling"; they beckon seductively, dangling the pleasure that comes from giving oneself over for a time to a fictive world of helplessness. That life can be difficult and threatening is not a copyrighted discovery of the new feminist fiction, and there is much in the longing, the anxiety, and the insecurity with which these novels are preoccupied that must strike universal chords of resonance. Actually, one might liken the strongest responses such a novel is capable of eliciting—the flooding of the consciousness by a non-rational, undifferentiated sense of grievance that seems at the moment it is experienced to constitute all of reality —to the total abandon with which men respond to pornography. An unnamed heroine of Lois Gould's:

> When I was married to Harry, I tried to give nice parties. . . . Every time, I spent a solid week in advance nervous hysteria, consulting fifteen different cookbooks and shopping for a hundred dollars' worth of heavy brown bags containing ingredients for possibly a dozen combinations of elegant dishes, because I would change my mind again and again before the party. This dessert would be too gooey following that main dish, and what about heating the hors d'oeuvre at 350 degrees when the cake needed 400, and how on earth can you end up with three different concoctions on the same plate, all of which are white and gooey?
>
> In the end I would spend all night in the kitchen, covered with grease like the stove, walls, and pots. . . . I could faintly hear the guests. . . . My cheeks were flaming; I would drink far too much wine and laugh high terrified laughter from the minute they came. I could barely even manage to say hello. . . . Instead I stared at the rings on the table, because there weren't enough coasters, and the flowing ashtrays, which I should have emptied before dinner—but how could I when the cake was burning and the chicken running blood from the joint after three hours of basting and loving attention? No one would ever eat what I brought out, they knew I would poison them, and the cake knife would be tarnished, and the wine spreading on the white cloth. I wanted only to die.

Scenes like this are actually the only really important business in books like *Final Analysis, Diary of a Mad Housewife,* or *Falling Bodies.* All the rest has an obviously perfunctory and contrived quality about it, as the author, momentarily

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deflected, journeys hurriedly through the real world so as to get back to the aberrations of her protagonists.

To be fair, one must acknowledge the hovering presence in these books, even in the least sophisticated of them, of a sense of impatience with this stuff, with the pretense that the narrow preoccupations of miserable women constitute a world that is as large as life. Since it is demanded by the conventions of the genre that the masquerade go forth with never a trace of irony, many an author is forced into a situation she herself cannot entirely control, and into creating characters with whom she is fundamentally uneasy. What happens then, as noted, is that less and less effort gets invested in the depiction of reality (lest it give the lie to fantasy). But when social milieu and secondary characters are thrust to the margins, the heroine still remains to be dealt with, and as often as not at this point the author's voice retreats into sarcasm. Thus, a technique which may be intended among other things to distance the author from the embarrassing antics of her characters, to dissemble the whining self-pity in which they wallow, serves in the end only thoroughly to muddle the portrayal of them.

ARE the women in *Diary of a Mad Housewife* and *Falling Bodies* truly going mad? If so, why does the narrator seem to ridicule them? Are they merely crybabies and fools? If so, why are they treated with such seriousness? These conflicting tendencies in feminist fiction reflect a contradiction endemic to the Women's Liberation movement itself. Theoretically our authors place a high value on the qualities their heroines lack: autonomy and self-determination. And yet they are enamored to a greater degree than they can bring themselves to admit of the world their bitter fantasies have created: a world not of martyrs and victims but of cripples and children. Like children, the characters in feminist novels have no notion of adulthood as anything other than a burden so heavy that it might better be done away with altogether. The world they inhabit is a world defined by their own dependency, a world in which no one, except the men whose values they abhor, has the slightest idea of what it might mean to take responsibility for one's own life.

As Isadora Wing frequently notes in *Fear of Flying*, men have "throughout all of history" written a great number of books about women. (And so have women.) Yet there has never been a portrayal of women quite like the one bodied forth in the pages of the feminist novel—with the possible exception, again, of the robots and receptacles of pornography. It is, to say the least, curious that authors fired by the spirit of a movement predicated on the worth of women should consistently create characters unwilling to take any initiative in their lives. It is equally strange that writers who participate in the spirit of the Women's Liberation movement should purvey so reductive and demeaning a vision of their sex. (A male writer would do so nowadays at peril of his life.) Whatever the motive, there is something repugnant in all this celebration of cowards, cripples, and losers. It is an offense to the memory of Natasha Rostov, of Jane Eyre and Emma Woodhouse, of Isabel Archer; it reeks of the hatred of women.

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Conversations in Cairo

Nadav Safran

Sunday

A FEW hours outside Cairo, the captain of our BEA flight makes an announcement over the loudspeaker: fifty pieces of luggage have been left behind at London airport. An unfortunate error—he regrets the inconvenience, etc., etc. One of the passengers, an American, bangs his fist against the armrest in a rage. He had made it a point, he recalls, to inquire about the baggage-transfer question before boarding, and had been told not to worry—the thing was automatic, no mistakes possible. Only the American is upset. The rest of the passengers, mostly Egyptians on their way home, take the news with perfect stoicism: "Now it's all a matter of luck," says one to his neighbor. The incident, trivial though it is, reveals that peculiar adaptability in the Egyptian character which is a source both of strength and weakness: the ability to defeat adversity (and time) by simply not dealing with it.

At Cairo airport heaps of debris piled up everywhere bear witness to an ambitious remodeling plan, launched some years ago but since abandoned for lack of funds. The result is a crazy mixture of the half-ruined and the ultra-contemporary, too old to be new, too new to be old, altogether lacking an identity of its own (unlike the old airport which, as I remember it, was small by present standards of mass travel, but perfectly satisfactory). The human side of the airport is more appealing. Bedlam, but no one seems to mind. People move along and things get done despite the chaos and 100-degree heat. Amazingly enough, no one loses his temper—not the harassed officials, not the madly scrambling public, not even those luckless passengers whose luggage has been left behind. Is this simply fatalism, or another instance of that same ingrained adaptability learned from millennia of experience?

En route to the hotel, my taxi driver is equally good-humored, despite the temperature and the lunatic traffic, honking cheerfully at passing vehicles, raising a finger to greet other drivers, wearing the look of a surfboard rider maintaining his balance against all odds. We pass through Heliopolis, Cairo's fifty-year-old urban development project, neglected but still impressive, despite the explosion of cars and people, then through an unexpectedly rural stretch, complete with donkeys and a lamb or two, once perhaps the site of an outlying village that has since been engulfed by the city, finally through Midan Ramses, with its huge statue of the ancient dynastic ruler surrounded by the central railway station and administration buildings. The railway structures were built under the monarchy, and are typical examples of the period; the statue of Ramses, however, which stands in the middle of the vast square, is of more recent vintage, put there by Nasser at the height of the pan-Arabist fever. This seems to offer an allegory of a nation torn between, and somehow reconciling, the Pharaonic and the Arab-Islamic traditions.

The view from the Hilton balcony is disappointing. The smog, it appears, has finally caught up with Cairo, and that breathtaking panorama of the Nile and its surroundings, which I caught some years ago from the nearby Hotel Semiramis, has been all but blotted out by the gaseous fumes emitted from every exhaust. At sunset, the Nile looks better, but something is still not quite right. Is it just that there are too many people getting in the way of the scenery? A walk in Midan al Tahrir confirms that impression. Cairo is choking on too many people and too much traffic, but unlike New York, the people hardly seem to be moving. Some are, of course, but many others just stand about, taking their ease, giving the huge square the look of a public park or a Spanish *zócalo*. There is no tension in the air at all. Even the policemen seem relaxed to the point of boredom, no longer set apart, as in the past, from the general populace. Their uniforms are crumpled, their postures casual, except for the ever-present submachine gun, carelessly wielded. Altogether, the people look more homogeneous than they did a few years ago. No more djellabahs—everyone is in Western dress. Cairo, at least the modern section, seems totally middle class. Boys and girls walk about arm-in-arm with complete naturalness—a great change from the past. Some sort of

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leveling process seems to have taken place, the few on top moving downward, the many on bottom moving up.

Monday

Coffee at Groppi's, once the "in" place for foreigners in Cairo—one of the many transplanted fragments of Europe catering to the needs and pleasures of Europeans—now a headquarters for journalists, intellectuals, and other observers of the scene. The atmosphere seems much the same as it was a few years ago, if perhaps slightly more relaxed—unlike the taxi driver who conveyed me there to the accompaniment of an unending tirade against America, the Jews, birth control, the state of the Egyptian theater, and whatever else he could think of, in the name of Islam. Too undisciplined to be a Moslem Brother, he would certainly be receptive to their appeal. . . .

Supper at the Pizzeria, where I am struck by the appearance of two young men who could easily pass for college students back in Cambridge —long hair, blue jeans, high heels, and all. To my surprise, they turn out to be not Egyptians at all, but Libyans studying at the University of Cairo. The conversation is gingerly at first, later grows more open, as they criticize the Qaddafi regime for not being "compatible with the times." But if they confirm my notion that young Libyans reject the concept of a Libyan national identity, they admit to feeling like "foreigners" in Egypt, though they are treated cordially by fellow students. Egypt, in their view, is tired of war—she has paid too high a price. At the same time, they take it entirely for granted that the dominant inclinations of politically conscious Egyptian students tend either toward Marxism or toward Islamic fundamentalism of the Moslem Brotherhood variety.

Tuesday morning

A visit to the neighborhood in which I grew up. The change is incredible. Thirty years ago it was a typical middle-class area, fairly prosperous, mainly inhabited by Jews. Today it is a slum—cramped, overcrowded, decaying. Our old street is all but hidden by an elevated highway that has blocked out the light and turned the street into a dark cave. The asphalt ripped up during the construction has never been replaced, so the ground is soft and bumpy, alternating between mud and dust. Despite the squalor, life goes on. A celebration of sorts is taking place in one of the alleys, with blaring music and graceful *nabboot* dances.

I try getting a photograph, but a young man in the crowd intervenes, pointing to a bridge overhead. My intention is to explain that in the age of satellites such things no longer matter, that photographs of the famous Nile bridges stitching Cairo together are taken constantly from every balcony in the Hilton. Instead, I hear myself muttering about my childhood, how I once lived here, how the photograph is purely personal. People begin to gather, puzzled at the contrast between my tourist paraphernalia and my fluent Arabic. It is all so difficult to explain, and I retreat—shaken, depressed, angry with myself. All eyes are on me, and I feel like a stranger fallen into the hands of some primitive tribe. Fleeing, I make my way to a busy intersection in the hope of finding a taxi, but three-quarters of an hour later I am still waiting, surrounded by an elemental hubbub: creaking, overloaded buses with passengers hanging from the windows, stalled cars being pushed, carts piled high with an incredible profusion of goods. Measly fruit stands, distracted traffic policemen, collapsing rooftops, boarded-up cinemas. It all has the look of some desperate, last-ditch struggle, yet I know it is merely the routine of daily life here. The poor have swept into this once prosperous quarter like a tidal wave, themselves driven by the flood of arrivals from the countryside. And the fleeing middle classes have in turn routed the foreigners who once occupied the elegent area surrounding the Hilton. A *Völkerwanderung* transposed to an urban 20th-century setting.

Wednesday afternoon

A meeting with Hassan,* one of the original makers of the revolution, now retired but still well-informed and well-connected, active on the fringes of public affairs. Relaxed, engaging, with an open face, Hassan inspires confidence, and even affection. As is frequently the case in Cairo, we start out talking about economics, and end up talking about politics.

The Egyptian people, he tells me, especially the simple ones, expect a lot from the United States. They equate America with abundance, and hope some of it will be shared with them, but Hassan fears these hopes will be disappointed. He dwells too on the bureaucratic bottlenecks that choke the flow of such investments as are available, referring, for example, to the vast amounts of foreign credits that remained unused in the past because the right hand knew not what the left was doing. Withal, in his opinion, the solution is not a free economy, for Egypt must retain a large public sector if only to absorb the masses of educated manpower spewed out by the educational system year after year. Hassan has a number of suggestions for aiding the economy, but they are secondary to the all-important issue of a peace settlement—the country cannot, he maintains, tolerate the costs of war and the ongoing confrontation any longer. Three years ago, he tells me, the Egyptian prime minister went on a tour of the country, carrying with him the sum of fifty million Egyptian pounds. This money he distributed in small amounts along the way—on a

* This name is fictitious, as are all names throughout.

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bridge in one place, a clinic in another, for the repair of some broken-down local facility in a third. These benefits were felt throughout the countryside, and people talked wistfully of what could be achieved if instead of fifty million, say, a thousand million pounds could be diverted from military spending to local needs.

But peace, Hassan says, must involve the return by Israel of all the territories, if the conflict is to be settled for good and forgotten. A settlement that left the status of Sharm el-Sheikh unresolved, for example, could not be seen as final. The same holds true for the Palestinian question, though Hassan acknowledges that the Palestinians themselves have complicated the problem by refusing to say explicitly what they want. In return for a state of their own in Gaza and the West Bank, the Palestinians, in his opinion, should declare unequivocally their willingness to recognize Israel and live at peace with her.

Thursday morning

A talk with Muhsin, a high government official specializing in economic affairs, of decidedly leftist background. He listens patiently to my proposal for U.S.-Egyptian cooperation in developing certain specific economic projects, but his reply is strictly according to formula: the Egyptian economy must remain socialist; Egypt alone must determine her priorities; Egypt must not become an American stronghold—she wishes to remain nonaligned. Clearly, Muhsin is voicing the fears of the leftists in the internal debate now taking place in the government circles.

It is he who switches the discussion from economic to political matters—what he calls the political prerequisite for development. The most important contribution the United States can make in his opinion is to advance a settlement. Boundaries must be fixed and accepted before détente and real economic growth are possible, and the boundaries must be those prior to 1967, for only such an outcome will allay the fear of an expansionist Israel. What about Israel's own security fears? He gives no credence to the question—why should Israel fear for *her* security? In any case, that can be taken care of by recognition, guarantees, etc. I ask about Israel's place in the future development of the area, and he replies that Israel must make up her mind to be part of the region, not merely a Western enclave within it. I ask what that means specifically, and he says that Israel must, for example, change her attitude toward the Israeli Arabs and the Oriental Jews.

When Muhsin first raises this point, I assume he is simply evading my question, but as we talk further, it becomes clear that the issue really matters to him, though his concern is badly phrased. With some passion he informs me that Europeans have always tended to hold the Arabs in contempt —Eastern Europeans even more so in his opinion (interestingly enough for a leftist) than Westerners—but that they are now learning to overcome these feelings and, in any case, Europe is far away. Israel, however, is right there in the Middle East, and continues to harbor these attitudes toward her own Oriental Jews. How then are the Arabs to deal with her?

I try to explain the roots of the communal problem in Israel, suggesting that time and ongoing development are bound to change certain social attitudes, but Muhsin is not convinced. I ask whether he feels closer psychologically to the new Israeli government, many of whose leaders were born and brought up in Israel, than he did to the old guard, which was mainly East European in origin. This, at least, strikes a responsive chord.

Sunday afternoon

LUNCH at the Muhammad Ali Club with Ali, a senior foreign policy adviser, and Mostafa, a Palestinian academic involved in the extreme wing of the PLO. In the past the Muhammad Ali was a British-style political club, where establishment people met to run the country and divide the spoils, over dinner or a leisurely card game. The marble staircases and high molded ceilings bear witness to the past glories of the place which today, alas, is merely another eating place for senior government officials.

On my arrival I am asked to adjudicate a dispute between Mostafa and Ali: are there or aren't there any Israeli settlements in Sinai? There are several such settlements in the Rafah area, I reply, as well as on the Gulf of Aqaba coast, and there is a budding urban settlement called Ophira, in the Sharm el-Sheikh area. Mostafa gives Ali a look of triumph but Ali responds with another question: "It is not true, is it, that the Israelis never give up an area once they have settled it?" I answer that I know of at least two cases where they did give up such an area. Now it is Ali's turn to look triumphant.

The conversation turns to other subjects and I mention in passing that until 1970 Nasser had been firmly opposed to a peace settlement. Mostafa, who had grown rather subdued, perks up suddenly and asserts that Nasser would never have agreed to make peace with Israel. Ali retorts that Nasser had decided "in his heart" to accept the Rogers Peace Plan in 1969 and kept up the war of attrition only in order to compel Israel, too, to accept it. I remark that to the best of my knowledge Nasser did not begin to digest the idea of peace until a short time before his death, in September 1970.

I must confess that I did not quite get the point of this discussion while it was taking place. Now I realize that Mostafa had been charging Sadat with deviating from the Nasserite line by seeking peace, a charge that Ali for his part was fervently denying. The name of Nasser is an automatic

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stamp of legitimacy in Egypt—every side wishes to claim him for its own. Resolution 242, for example, is invoked constantly in Egypt by adherents of every position on the political spectrum; the fact that Nasser agreed to it, though he was careful to stress only that part which dealt with Israeli withdrawal, has rendered the resolution politically acceptable.

Monday afternoon

A MEETING with two staff members of *al-Ahram*, Egypt's most influential newspaper, and the unofficial voice of the government. The building is quite impressive in its decor and efficiency—sumptuously modern in the international style—and I am guided smoothly to my destination by a series of uniformed attendants. Along the way I catch a glimpse of a vast newsroom with perhaps sixty or seventy brand-new desks, most of them unoccupied, each boasting a minimum of four telephones. Mohammad Hassanein Heykal, the paper's famous former editor, who is said to have supervised every detail of the building personally, was obviously a great believer in the telephone as status symbol—there seem to be many more phones than people, and the very highest executives have complete little switchboards by their desks. Apart from the phones, the most striking thing about the place is the quiet. There is none of that disorderly bustle and excitement associated with newspaper offices the world over; the atmosphere here is more reminiscent of an efficient research laboratory.

The discussion, which takes place in an elegantly paneled inner office, touches on many things, but keeps returning to the question of Israel's intentions. Why, after seeking negotiations for so long, does she seem now to be dragging her feet? What about Rabin? My interlocutors recognize that he needs time to establish his authority but fear he is painting himself into a corner with unnecessarily harsh public pronouncements. Abdellah, one of the editors, suggests Israel is acting now the way Egypt did after the war of 1967—trying desperately to gain time, if not to prepare for another round of fighting, then at least to shore up her bargaining position. I express skepticism at this interpretation, if only because of the strong American interest in peace, but they doubt that America can exert sufficient pressure at the present time to move things forward. Everyone agrees that the Palestinian question is now at the heart of things, but no one knows quite what to make of it. At one point the Palestinians are blamed for making things difficult, later on it is the United States, or Israel, or Iraq and Libya. My feeling is that these newspaper people have no clear position on the Palestine question, and are not privy to the circles which will make Egyptian policy on this question. About Israel's actions in Lebanon, there seems to be genuine fear and puzzlement. The possibility that these actions are defensive, or have as their aim nothing more than the cessation or restriction of guerrilla activity, is dismissed out of hand. Instead, they are viewed as an effort to bring about a "military solution to the Palestinian problem," both by driving a wedge between the guerrilla leaders and their members, and by provoking conflict between the Palestinians and the Lebanese.

This view, of course, reflects the general tendency of each side in a conflict to put the worst possible construction on the actions of the other side. Does it also signify a judgment of intentions on the basis of results? I am surprised also by how much these journalists underestimate the degree to which Israel was shaken up by the October 1973 "earthquake" and the extent to which it might now be living from hand to mouth, politically speaking. The news about forthcoming billions in military aid appears to have overshadowed all else, and created the impression of a restored nation with whom the bargaining will not be easy.

Tuesday morning

A meeting with Ezzat, a political commentator of leftist leanings and patrician lineage, every inch the aristocrat, down to the studied casualness of his dress. Ezzat is a bit verbose and abstract, clearly likes to hear himself talk, rather like a character in a Russian novel: the aristocrat with a social conscience.

He begins with the obligatory statement of his political credo (détente and coexistence do not mean the end of the ideological struggle, Egypt will never abandon socialism, etc., etc.), after which he is willing to deal with the issues under discussion in a more empirical fashion. Ezzat, like many other Egyptian leftists I have met, seems to feel a need to propitiate his ideological conscience before violating it.

The political scene in Egypt is like a mosaic, Ezzat tells me. Everyone has his sphere, all the spheres coexist, and none is supposed to impinge on the others. But this situation is unstable, and anything can happen. The most dangerous likelihood in his view is that the masses, frustrated in their expectations, will turn for salvation to some brand or other of militant religious fundamentalism.

I have the impression that Ezzat and other leftists fear that politically they may be living on borrowed time. Nasser had finally assigned them a role in his scheme of things—one which necessitated certain painful adjustments. They made those adjustments, only to discover all the old arrangements coming undone under the impact of liberalization, changing relations with the U.S. and the oil-producing countries, and so on. Now they are trying hard to carve out a new role for themselves, but are afraid to assert it too vehemently for fear of suppression. In a fluid situation one may pursue either the politics of principle or the

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politics of opportunism with no great difficulty; but to pursue both at the same time is not an easy task.

Wednesday evening

Dinner with Hassan again (the former member of the original Revolutionary Council) at the Hunting Club, formerly known as the Royal Hunting Club and still called that by everyone in Cairo.

The place is full though it is already 10 o'clock on an ordinary weekday night. The patrons are all habitués and greet one another in the consciousness of belonging to a select fraternity. The deference of the waiters, the quality of the service, the luxurious surroundings—the diners eat on a vast terrace bordered by lawns and surrounded by woods—are clearly not of this era. The cool breeze, the soft lights, the muffled faraway echoes of the city create the illusion of some private retreat, scarcely linked to the rest of the city.

"Who are these people?" I ask my host.

"Former VIP's, former senior government officials, former provincial governors, former directors of big companies."

"Is everybody 'former'?"

"Not quite everybody."

The stress on "former" is interesting. People who are "out" are treated rather gently here—the civilized Egyptian way of doing things. Did the Egyptians get it from the British, I wonder, or has it been theirs from way back?

As we nibble our way through a many-course meal, Hassan, in answer to my question, attempts to explain from which sources the present regime derives its authority. To begin with, there is the legitimacy that comes from the mere holding of power; secondly, there is the absence of rival centers of power that could possibly challenge Sadat —the old ones have been eliminated and new ones have not yet emerged. Thirdly, there is the aura of success adhering to Sadat in the aftermath of the October war, and the hopes and expectations stirred by it. Finally, there is the backing and support of the usual clique around the President who stand to benefit from the continuance of things as they are. (In making his last point Hassan motions with his head toward our fellow diners.)

Thursday

A talk with Aziz, one of Sadat's senior foreign-policy advisers, on the subject of the Palestinians, with frequent interruptions from subordinates tiptoeing in to whisper a message or obtain a signature. A short, husky man wearing thick horn-rimmed glasses, Ariz appears calm and self-confident, but the clutter of pill-bottles and medications on his desk tells a different story. Aziz, a self-styled "realist" and "pragmatist," disposes in one quick barrage of those participants in the Palestine drama for whom he has no use: first, the so-called intellectuals of the "resistance movement"—all those professors in the West, or at the American University in Lebanon, who are willing to fight to the last Palestinian from the safety of their studies; second, the "Palestinian bourgeoisie," shedding crocodile tears over the refugees, but consistently opposing any real initiative to solve their problems; third, the "apparatchiks" of the guerrilla movement, more concerned about the survival of their organizations than about the welfare of their fellow Palestinians. Such types, he declares with ardor, do not interest him—he, Aziz, is concerned only about the Palestinian *people*, and insists that as long ago as 1967 he was urging the fledgling Palestinian leaders to accept the fact that Israel exists and will continue to do so, that the Arabs will never manage to defeat her decisively and would not be allowed—even if they could finally win—to reap the fruits of their own victory. In short, since war will not dispose of Israel, why not agree to negotiate? So far as the present situation is concerned, there are, in Aziz's view, four concerned parties to the Palestine question—the PLO, Israel, Jordan, and the United States. Each of these interested parties is prepared to yield ground in certain areas, while remaining absolutely rigid in others. The problem is to manage things in such a way as to bring into play the maximum amount of flexibility available in each position.

Friday morning

A TALK with Dr. Hamdi of the Arab Socialist Union. The meeting has been arranged at his behest, not mine, and he greets me in friendly fashion. Nevertheless, our conversation never really gets off the ground.

I explain in a relatively few words why I have come to Egypt, stressing the exploratory nature of my trip and the urgency, to my way of thinking, of U.S. peacemaking efforts at this critical juncture; by way of reply, Dr. Hamdi favors me with a lecture—the stock-in-trade, it seems, of discourse on the Egyptian Left. Beneath the verbiage, two points are discernible: 1) The Palestinians have problems—it is extremely important at this moment to avoid promoting further factionalism, which can only end by enhancing the extremists at the expense of the moderates. 2) There is still, contrary to what I may have heard, much hostility to the United States in Egypt, built up during the Nasser era, and much suspicion of American motives—a feeling among the people that the U.S. wants to undermine the socialist regime, promote capitalism and reaction, etc., etc.

In the course of this monologue we have moved from Hamdi's office into a kind of study-*cum*-conference room belonging apparently to the Secretary General of the Arab Socialist Union. The new setting, whose decor is entirely Soviet-inspired, lends a curious extra dimension

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to Dr. Hamdi's words. Looking around at the pictures of Lenin on the walls, the many Russian volumes on the shelves, and the travel books and other mementos of visits to the Soviet Union scattered about everywhere, I suddenly begin to understand an important aspect of Egyptian political life. All these years an effort has been going on to generate some sort of popular Marxist movement which would serve as an ideological underpinning for the regime. This effort has never really succeeded, however, producing instead an array of political forms devoid of content, a Marxism of gesture and rhetoric. The much-vaunted "hostility" to the United States, to which Hamdi referred, is as good an example as any of this kind of ritualistic, largely meaningless rhetorical offering.

That the Soviets were taken in by the rhetoric, leaving themselves open to repeated surprise and disillusionment, is not surprising. One can easily imagine how delegations from the Soviet or other "friendly socialist countries" might sit in this room and find themselves lulled by its decor into believing Egypt was solidly in the Soviet camp. Khrushchev, for example, seems to have been misled in exactly this way, to judge by his memoirs. Against such a background, how startling and dismaying Sadat's sudden turnabout and the succession of subsequent blows to Egyptian-Soviet solidarity must have seemed.

In parting, Dr. Hamdi allows himself a touch of historical irony. Previously, he points out, citing Russian support for the creation of a Jewish State, it was the Left that was "moderate" with regard to Israel and the Right which was intransigent. Today, of course, the roles are reversed, with the Left championing the militant Arab cause, and the Right prepared to go the way of negotiation and settlement, rapprochement with the U.S., liberalization, etc.

Friday evening

Dinner in a penthouse overlooking the Nile, *chez* Makram, a wealthy and cultivated Coptic family whose genealogy bristles with illustrious forebears. Visitors are greeted by a liveried servant and escorted through beautifully-appointed rooms to a terrace thick with flowers and potted plants, enclosed on two sides by lattice work panels that have been salvaged from some defunct palace or other. Seated on low benches that have been covered with Oriental rugs, we sip our drinks and look out over the silvery Nile, while the servants move about unobtrusively, refilling glasses and replenishing platters.

The opulent setting recalls Durrell's Alexandria, and I ask my dinner companions whether they have read the Alexandria Quartet and what they think of it. The question evokes giggles and consternation at once—not only have they read the work, they know all the real-life characters on which it is based. Without their patronage, moreover, Durrell would not have been "received" into Alexandrian society—a favor which he ill repaid in portraying Justine and her Coptic husband as supporters of Zionism. "There are no traitors among the Copts," one gray-haired lady asserts haughtily, "and everything else about the book is also false!" But how could Durrell, "a mere schoolteacher," have grasped the soul of Alexandria? The conversation turns from literary matters to a comparison of the Nasser era with the present regime. My companions outdo each other in praising Sadat at the expense of his tyrannical predecessor—"I would bow to him and kiss his hands," says the old lady, "for what he did for us in the October war"—yet only a short time later, they are all ardently engaged in criticizing the government. Durrell, it seems, knew his subjects better than they know themselves—not least in their charming, if also maddening, inconsistency. . . .

Saturday morning

DR. KHAYYAM, a legal administrator and author, comes to see me at his own insistence—he has read all my works and particularly admires my book on Egypt, notwithstanding a blistering review he has written of the work which he thoughtfully leaves behind for my perusal. Why, I ask myself in genuine puzzlement, did he bring it up in the first place? Is this a case of *aho kalam*—"It's only words"—as they say in Arabic?

Dr. Khayyam in any case has come on a mission of good fellowship—to urge upon me his belief, obviously genuine and strongly-held, that the future hope of the Middle East rests in stressing the common ethical and religious heritage of Jews and Arabs. The Torah, he points out, says many beautiful things that Moslems and Christians can readily accept; the Koran, for its part, is full of favorable references to the Jews. We writers and intellectuals must address ourselves to the task of reconciliation between these two great peoples who have given the world its three great religions.

That afternoon, while taking a last leisurely stroll through the streets of downtown Cairo, I notice a pile of books for sale by one of the kiosks. One title in particular catches my eye—*The Talmud and the Jews*—which turns out on closer inspection to be a scurrilous compendium of Talmudic sayings wrenched from their context whose purpose is to depict the Jews and Judaism in the worst possible light. I recall the heartfelt words of Dr. Khayyam. Which, then, is the real Egypt? Or is this too just one more case of *aho kalam*? . . .

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Plural Establishment

Milton Himmelfarb

In two months three substantial articles bearing directly or indirectly on the New Ethnicity have appeared in COMMENTARY: Nathan Glazer's "Ethnicity and the Schools" (September), Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan's "Why Ethnicity?" (October), and Robert Alter's "What Jewish Studies Can Do" (also October). The social-science journals have not been lacking in papers, notes, comments, and disputations. In *Center Magazine* for July-August let me mention only John Higham's "Integration vs. Pluralism: Another American Dilemma." Ethnicity seems to be topical.

Like some of those writers, or maybe all of them in some of their moods, I am not sure just what the New Ethnicity is and how real it is. Is it perhaps an artifact? Fifteen and twenty years ago, when ethnicity was thought to be dead or dying, and anyway of little importance, I suspected that the news of its death had been exaggerated. Voting studies confirmed my suspicion. Ethnicity counted, though how to separate out its effects from the effects of religion and class remained unclear. Now that the pendulum has swung, I am perversely inclined to suspect that the news of ethnicity's robust health has been exaggerated.

The thesis of Will Herberg's influential *Protestant, Catholic, Jew* was that religion had replaced or subsumed ethnicity. Religion, more acceptable in America, could also discharge ethnicity's functions of identity, comfort, community, and continuity. If there has really been a revival of ethnicity, maybe that is due not only to black particularism's success but also to the ethnics' feeling that their religion no longer discharges those functions.

Mostly I have in mind Catholics of European origin. The children of Protestant immigrants from England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, and Canada rapidly become indistinguishable from old-stock Americans: John Lindsay is not a son of the American Revolution, he is the son of an immigrant from England, and John Kenneth Galbraith was born in Ontario. Nor do Nordics have much trouble. The *Journal of Politics* for August published an instructive note by Gary C. Byrne and J. Kristian Pueschel, "But Who Should I Vote for for County Coroner?," which shows how Californians choose one candidate rather than another when all the candidates are unknown. Only two kinds of names help a candidate, Scandinavian and English, but Scandinavian a good deal more: +24 per cent and +3 per cent respectively. (The authors do not say why. Because Wright or Baldwin or Wilkins may be black, but hardly Olson?) The biggest handicap is an Italian surname: −39 per cent.

Italians, Poles, most other Slavs, Lithuanians, Hungarians, to some degree Irish—the white, Catholic, immigrant-stock working and lower-middle class of Chicago, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Buffalo, Boston—used to know the Church was their friend. They were New Deal, and so was the Church—about unions, social security, unemployment insurance. They were anti-Communist, and so was the Church. The Church supported their values—family, work, order. It was Mother Church. It scolded, as mothers do, but above all it nourished and comforted, as mothers do. In "modern"—i.e., by now rather old-fashioned Reform—Jewish terms, mothers are more priestly than they are prophetic. Most of the time, most people want their religion priestly. If the ethnics were to use such a vocabulary, they might complain that the Church, or a conspicuous or noisy part of it, having given up its priestly, comforting vocation, has become a stepmother. Berrigans and revolutionary nuns have not much that is good to say for the familiar and comforting.

No doubt much of this was inevitable. In the nature of things there is apt to be tension between the elite and folk, pulpit and pew, seminary and congregation. The French used to say that a socialist minister of state was more likely to resemble other ministers of state than to resemble other socialists. Especially nowadays a professor of theology is more likely to resemble other professors than to resemble other members of the communion whose putative theology he is assumed to profess, and his students will be influenced in the same direction. In sum, the academy, with its universalism that tolerates or favors some particularisms but not others, could not easily be prevented from becoming, for growing numbers of clergy-

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men, what social psychologists call the reference group.

As between prophet and priest, professors love the prophet more. Or so they like to think, for love of the prophetic may not be entirely free of self-deception. If the priestly is the ritual, the expected, the repeated, the soothing, then some things that carry a prophetic label may in fact be priestly. A congregation can be made unhappy if its clergyman fails to denounce it for its favorite sin: in one congregation, neglected prayer or profaned sabbaths; in another, more up to date, the internal-combustion engine. Which is to say that denunciation of sin can be ritual, cultic, even when the manifest content is prophetic. Not priests alone are associated with cult. Bible scholarship knows of cultic prophets.

In the Ottoman Empire a Christian priest was also ethnarch, a leader of his *ethnos,* his people. The priest-ethnarch seems to have been untroubled by his dual role. So it was generally in the United States, too, until the universalist academy—but of course not that alone—made ethnic leadership seem embarrassingly narrow and petty. An old Orthodox Jewish joke: "The Jewish people was healthy, before Rabbis became Doctors." Greeks and Armenians, especially in their diasporas, are still served by priests who are ethnarchs.

It has always been true that there are prophetic demands, of justice and mercy, which the folk may not like to be reminded of. It is then the duty of a priest, knowing he is priest and not prophet, to remind them. There are difficulties enough in such a situation without our adding to them needlessly, but we have added to them needlessly. In the spirit of the *Psychopathology of Everyday Life* let me adduce a telling little usage, the fondness of our class of people for the word "change."

When Peter Marris's *Loss and Change* becomes available in the United States, I mean to read it. According to the (London) *Times Literary Supplement,* this book is about what its author learned in fifteen years as a social anthropologist in England and Africa:

> . . . the various situations of social change which he has studied . . . have in common the experience of the same kind of psychological crisis as that which follows a bereavement. . . . The closest parallel with bereavement through death is the destruction of homes that goes with slum-clearance, with the separation from accustomed social contacts, and the translation to a new environment which makes the previous way of life impossible. . . . He sees "tribalism" [to which the reviewer prefers "the more precise concept of ethnicity"] as a way of "maintaining a protective social distance," rather than of defending material interests. . . . Scientists, too, feel bereavement when fundamental theories have to be discarded, and here the analogy with grieving consists in the process by which continuity is reestablished; until this has been done "the profession of science loses confidence in its identity."

We knew this about change all along. We knew that a changing neighborhood is not changing for the better. Why therefore did we like to call ourselves change agents, why were we disappointed with our communities for their coolness to us when we told them we were coming to make changes? Why did we at least not say "progress" instead of "change"?

Talking with Catholic friends and colleagues about the replacement of Latin by the vernacular in the Catholic liturgy, I have regretted that they did not ask us Jews what happened when the more progressive of us all but abandoned Hebrew (and abolished chant) in our liturgy. Vernacular Jewish worship has not unarguably made for greater spirituality, or even better synagogue attendance. The reforming progressives wanted Judaism modern, Occidental. Now, in our cities and university towns, some of our young people are chanting again, but in Sanskrit or Pali—languages neither Occidental nor, even in India, vernacular. One has the impression that more of the chanters are from the families of reformers than of Jews who stayed with the traditional liturgy. As a friend of mine has put it, give up *krishma* (i.e., *qeri'at shema'*, recitation of the *shema'*: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, etc.") and you may find your children praying to Krishna—in his language. If I am not mistaken, it was after Latin had been dropped that glossolalia began to spread among Catholics.

Nor was it the folk, on the whole innocent of Latin, who clamored to get rid of it. If they did not know it here, neither had their parents or grandparents known it in Europe. They were content with vernacular sermons and confession and facing pages in the missal. Latin was removed by Latinists. They gave the folk what it did not ask for. It asked for continuity in the midst of frightening change.

Neither did the folk ask for the abolition of meatless Friday. In Catholic theology abstinence from meat is a penance, and contemporary theologians do not think highly of it. Is it penitential, they ask, to substitute lobster Newburg for lean meat? Agreed. But suppose the folk liked meatless Friday not so much for penance as from a habit that expressed the human need for sacral eating? What is Thanksgiving without turkey, Purim without *hamantashen*? Especially among the educated the triumph of the secular, the desacralized, is old hat, yet it is precisely the educated who are resacralizing food—for I do not believe that the vogue of the organic is just a matter of nutritional science. A man I have been told about used to upbraid his brother for

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sinning against reason by continuing to observe *kashruth*. For that man's children organic is not enough. They insist on macrobiotic. Organic is only kosher, macrobiotic is *glat* kosher.

Since the end of Latin and of Friday meatlessness, Catholic church attendance has fallen off sharply. From all this it may be deduced that when one thinks it necessary to be radical about changing substance, one should be all the more conservative about keeping form. If the Catholic ethnics are now more ethnic and less Catholic, should we applaud? Of a church that is universal —catholic—but that also must care for the particular groupings into which its communicants fall, we can expect a better management of the tension between universal and particular than we can expect of groupings that are particularist and little else.

IN FRANCE, Péguy said, *"Tout commence en mystique et finit en politique."* In the United States, we may say that everything begins with sociology and ends with government programs. No one knows what "ethnic" is exactly, yet it figures in regulations drawn up by civil servants and determines who shall dispose of millions of dollars. If the tax laws encourage the unnecessary production of widgets, widgets will be produced. That is distorting, but at least for the Internal Revenue Service all widgets are widgets. In other reaches of the bureaucracy, not all ethnic groups are ethnic: to be "ethnic" is to be "disadvantaged." In the United States there are almost as many people of Italian descent as black people, but an Italian who wants to go to one of the elite colleges is not entitled to affirmative action, as it is called, though the black presence in those colleges is significantly greater than the Italian. Orientals are entitled to affirmative action, though Daniel P. Moynihan has reported that of all groups in America the Chinese have the highest proportion of Ph.D.'s, and though everyone knows that from the low point of thirty years ago the Japanese have gone ahead and done well.

To be accepted as a college student or teacher, it helps to have a Spanish surname. Castro is surely a Spanish surname. The Italian immigrant of that name has made a fortune in convertible sofas. Do his grandchildren get affirmative action? Would the Bolivian tin billionaire Patino's heirs, if they were to come to the United States? If DeFunis had borne a different Sephardi name—Franco, say, or Lopez—would he have had that trouble with his law school?

If I am a black immigrant from the West Indies, why should the son of an immigrant from Hungary agree that I am entitled to compensation? Why should he agree that I am entitled to compensation if I am an Argentine immigrant with a Spanish name? (How do you justify favoring Argentines with Spanish names over Argentines with Italian or Jewish names?) Why should not that son of Hungarian immigrants try to make a Hungarian name as advantageous as a Spanish one? And if Hungarian, why not the rest of a long list, including English and Scotch-Irish? (Think of Appalachia.) The best thing we can do for ethnicity is to remove it from codes, regulations, and guidelines.

Tammany, a buffer between the reality of groups and a Constitution that knew only individuals, reconciled the balanced ticket and the anonymous civil-service examination (though it liked patronage better). When we do formally what Tammany did informally we get the quotas of the 1972 Democratic convention. The election gauged their appeal.

Codes and regulations create interests. If tomorrow, miraculously, the income tax were abolished, all would rejoice; but not quite all. There are those who have an interest in the income tax—not only the examiners of the Internal Revenue Service, and not only the economists of the Treasury and the Congressional committees, but also the tax lawyers and the tax accountants, and the tax-law and tax-accountancy publishers, and their employees and suppliers and dependents. And so with ethnicity. If people rely upon its official status for livelihood and position, they will fight its being restored to unofficial status. I know a man who makes his living as a contract-compliance consultant, telling companies and local governments how to deal with—mostly, how to fill out reports for, and how to avoid antagonizing—the "minority" specialists in Washington. This man, too, no less than the minority deans and recruiters and negotiators of recruitment goals and timetables (on the one hand) and the minority specialists in the government bureaus (on the other hand), needs ethnicity, or some ethnicities, to be the business of government bureaus. As in the notorious relation between the regulatory agencies and the industries they regulate, *de facto* collusion between the ethnic regulators and the ethnically regulated is inherent. They have in common an interest in ethnic regulation.

PLURAL establishment is Matthew Arnold's idea, though he does not seem to have used that form of words. A parent, Arnold acted on the principle of sensible parents: "Go see what the children are doing, and tell them to stop." Is our son a jock? Tell him to read more. Is our daughter a bookworm? Tell her to exercise more. Are the people too Hebraic? Tell them to be more Hellenic. Too Hellenic? Tell them to be more Hebraic.

To try and draw lessons for America from Arnold's way of thinking is a questionable enterprise. He refused to celebrate the fundamental

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American doctrine—disestablishment, the separation of church and state. It was that doctrine which animated the many Englishmen who succeeded in disestablishing the (Anglican) Church of Ireland. Without great hope, Arnold kept arguing for plural or multiple establishment instead. Keep the Church of Ireland established, he said, but establish also the Roman Catholic Church, of the great mass of the Irish, and the Presbyterian Church, of the majority in the northern counties. He thought Louis Napoleon's France right to establish not only Catholicism but also Protestantism and Judaism. Arnold's instinct was to include, to gather in. Before ever there was a sociology of religion he knew about church and sect. He liked church and disliked sect. Church was established, sect was hole-in-corner (he was fond of the colloquialism). Sects were cranky and lopsided, churches broad and historical. Establish a sect and it becomes a church, bringing sectaries into the mainstream. To the fairness of disestablishing the established he preferred the fairness and wisdom of severally establishing the disestablished.

It may be downright tactless to invoke Arnold when talking about American things. He thought separationist America deficient in culture, even more philistine than the philistine English middle class. But it is not tactless to recall his feeling for an inclusiveness that yet was at ease with distinctiveness, for distinctiveness that yet was not the same as hole-in-corner isolation.

Arnold had no high regard for what he called machinery, and Americans are supposed to love machinery. We have harmed ourselves, I think, by denying tax support to schools sponsored by religious bodies or affiliated with them. The legal argument against support has been from the no-establishment clause of the Constitution, but the more accessible argument has been from public policy: denominational education, we are told, is divisive. Researchers have found that people educated in those allegedly divisive schools are citizens much like those educated in tax-supported schools. That makes no difference. Legally—Arnold would say, mechanically—the schools of Imamu Baraka's followers in Newark are public, tax-supported. That they are more divisive than zealous anti-papists ever suggested the Catholic schools were, is beside the point. The machinery cannot be faulted. Let justice be done though the heavens fall—and though it is not entirely beyond dispute that justice is factually being done.

Because Arnold cared about culture not machinery, if he were alive among us today he would see that we do have an established religion—"established" in the monopolizing sense he disliked—and that its name is paganism. We cannot see that. Paganism a religion, never mind the established one? If it were, would we not send our checks to the First Pagan Church and claim a tax deduction? (In fact, the Supreme Court itself has declared "Secular Humanism" to be an American religion. Secular humanism is Enlightenment, and a noted authority calls the Enlightenment, approvingly, modern paganism.)

LIKE that man in Boswell, I try to be a philosopher, but cheerfulness keeps breaking in.

Everybody knows that being a Jew is not "religious"—as being a Methodist, say, is religious. But that does not make us ethnic, either. The very history of "ethnic" should be cautionary. New Testament *hoi ethnikoi* and Septuagint and New Testament *ta ethne* render Hebrew *(ha-)goyim*—Gentiles, pagans. (At some future time I hope to return to my dissatisfaction with the New English Bible. In the meantime, consider Romans 1:13. Paul writes the Christians in Rome that he would like to have a successful mission among them, as he has had *en tois loipois ethnesin:* Vulgate, *in ceteris gentibus;* Luther, *unter andern Heiden;* King James Version, "among other Gentiles"; Revised Standard Version, "among the rest of the Gentiles"; Jerusalem Bible, 1966, "among the other pagans"; New American Bible, 1970, "among the other Gentiles,"; but NEB, without so much as a note, "in other parts of the world.")

I went to high school and college by subway, which was full of Jews (and Italians). On the subway I studied Latin and French but not, though I was continuing with my Jewish studies, Hebrew. The exotic alphabet of a Greek grammar was suitable, of a Hebrew one unsuitable. Some Jews I have read about, a generation or so older than I, got sick when they saw anyone reading a Yiddish newspaper on the train. I was not that bad. All I did was to act on the unwritten law that Hebrew print was to be kept away from the public, American domain—including the subway, with all those other Jews riding it. Hebrew was to be read at home or in some specifically Jewish place. The slogan of the Haskalah was, Be a human being abroad and a Jew at home. I obeyed it before I had heard of it. In retrospect, it is not hard to understand either the slogan or the obedience. It is only hard to admire them.

That was when I was young.

Not long ago a girl told me what had happened while she was on a bus in the town we live in, where the proportion of Jews is nothing like what it was in the New York of my youth. For her, the background of her story was that she had a Bible open, for memorizing the Song of the Sea—"Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song, etc."—that being her Hebrew-school assignment. For me, her open Hebrew Bible was the foreground. She had never learned that you do not open a Hebrew book in public.

When an Orthodox rabbi's son, who had at-

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tended *yeshivot*, went to college, the rabbi told him, "As a graduate student I didn't feel I had to keep my head covered all the time. If you don't feel like it, don't." The son answered, "Yes, I know your generation had problems." I resist the temptation to tell a dozen more stories like these, except that I will repeat what a holdover from the bad old days said when she saw a young man wearing a *kippah* at the Ivy League university she was intensely grateful to for having admitted her son, a mere Jew. Told that the grotesque phenomenon was an instructor, no less, she cried out, "After all the university has done for him, this is how he repays it?!"

The same university, which when I was young stood for everything remote and forbiddingly May-flower, this year, in its invitation to a parents' weekend, promised a Saturday brunch of blintzes with sour cream, pastrami, bagels with lox and cream cheese, and chopped chicken liver. The menu was farcical, the intention serious.

In this respect, at least, young people are healthier than my generation was, and their America healthier than ours. Arnold would not have been surprised. He expected plural religious establishment to be good for individual souls and for the country, and he would have had no reason to draw the line at plural ethnic or religious-and-ethnic establishment. Our young people are beneficiaries of the newish plural establishment. So are their elders, and the country.

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Books in Review

Master Builder

THE POWER BROKER: ROBERT MOSES AND THE FALL OF NEW YORK. By ROBERT A. CARO. *Knopf. 1246 pp. $17.95.*

Reviewed by B. BRUCE-BRIGGS

THE sheer size of this book is the first sign that something is amiss. Henry Adams managed the fifty-year career of Albert Gallatin, the diplomat-financier, in 275,000 words; T. Harry Williams handled Huey Long in 375,000. Cleveland Rodgers, the first biographer of Robert Moses, brought his career up to 1952 in 130,000 words; why then does Robert A. Caro require 640,000? It is true that Robert Moses had a long and distinguished career building and operating parks, highways, bridges, and other public works in New York City and State, but he was merely a local official, who will soon be quite forgotten.

The author attempts to justify the scale of his enterprise by investing Moses with wide significance, claiming, for instance, that Moses's parkways became the national model, and were therefore responsible for what Caro views as one of the worst features of modern American society. In fact, Moses's landscaped parkways, restricted to automobiles, and paid for by tolls, have scarcely been imitated. The nationwide model is the California freeway—starkly utilitarian, financed by gasoline taxes, and open to all traffic. Moses's last expressways were in the California style, and as his parkways are "improved," the characteristic Moses details—stonefaced bridges, wooden light standards, elegant curves—are eliminated.

An issue like this is symptomatic; a critical study of Robert Moses would require some elementary knowledge of the development of highway engineering, landscape architecture, and public finance, all of which are beyond Caro's ken. The real subject of *The Power Broker* is not Robert Moses at all, but the author's unremitting hatred of him—there is no other word to describe the ugly bias which pervades this work. Caro sees Moses as a kind of monster who can do no right, whose achievements are crimes against the public weal, whose very virtues—intelligence, competence, physical strength—only made him more dangerous. The most innocent details of Moses's life are given a sinister aspect: his passion for swimming is meant to remind the reader of Caligula at Capri; his VIP treatment of official visitors is evidence of the wish to corrupt; his mother's concern for the poor masks some darker impulse; even the fact that his office was located under the Triborough Bridge is a sign of surreptitiousness. As though all this were not enough, Caro also blames Moses for crime in public-housing projects, for the decay of the New York subway system, and even for the graffiti in subway cars, the worst examples of which are spelled out, in capital letters.

The source of Caro's animus toward Moses is not revealed in the book; perhaps it is entirely impersonal, a consequence of the author's general world view, according to which most politicians are motivated by greed, vindictiveness, and the lust for power, and are stupid and foul-mouthed to boot. There is little room in Caroland for affection, loyalty, or public-spiritedness; New York, in his version, bears no resemblance to the polity which kept men like Al Smith, Lehman, LaGuardia, and Dewey in office for long periods of time. Caro has little feeling for the political life as it is actually lived. For example, he goes on for a half-page describing the plush luxury of Moses's car, apparently unaware that the vehicle in question was an ordinary Cadillac limousine, the standard perquisite for high municipal officials. He makes much of Moses's famous denunciations of critics and opponents, unaware that a gift for picturesque invective was once—in pre-television days—considered an asset to a politician. Moses's contemporaries viewed him rather as a "character" in, say, the Harold Ickes mold. Many of those described by Caro as bitter enemies were sometimes no more than friendly antagonists.

So blatant are Caro's omissions, and so one-sided is his picture of Moses, that we soon stop believing in it altogether. Examples of such omissions and distortions are legion. Caro tell us that Moses, at the peak of his career, was virtually all-powerful in New York (the Long Island Parkway Police were "his private army"), but in fact his defeats were frequent: the scuttling of his proposal for a Battery Bridge; the fact that he was never able to control the Port Authority, and even lost the New York airports to it; the blocking of his plan for the Manhattan expressways. To prove his charge that Moses consistently favored the rich against the poor, Caro cites the rerouting of the Northern State Parkway to avoid the great estates of Old Westbury, and the running of highways through the poor neighborhoods of East Tremont; no mention is made, how-

B. BRUCE-BRIGGS *is completing a book about the future of cities to be published by Basic Books in 1975. Mr. Bruce-Briggs contributed "Against the Neo-Malthusians" to the July* COMMENTARY.

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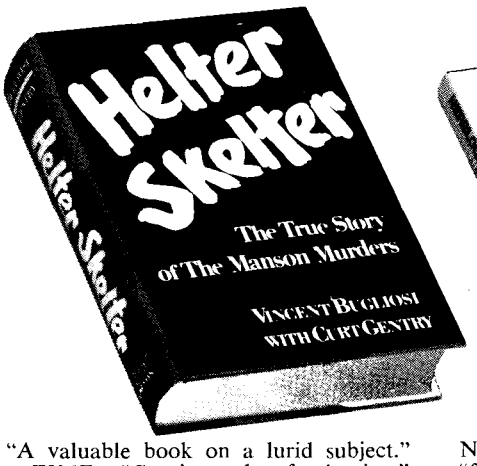

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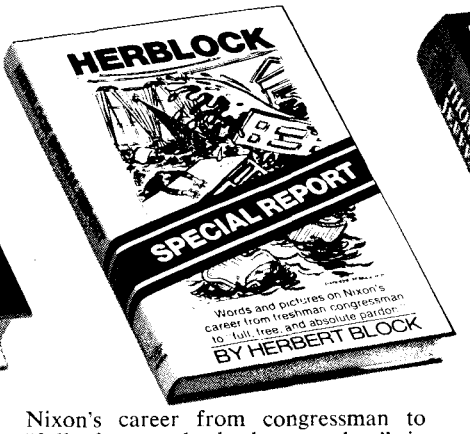
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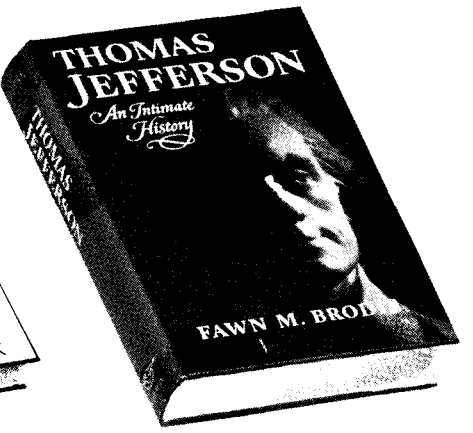

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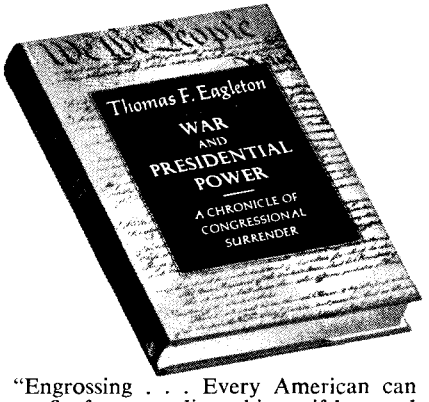

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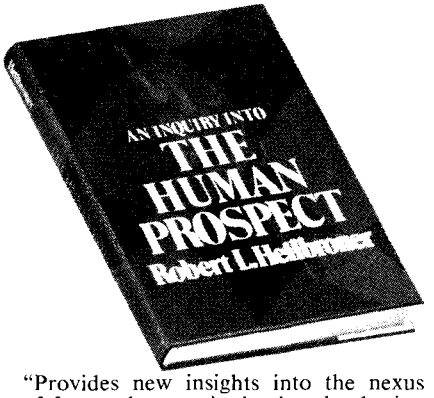

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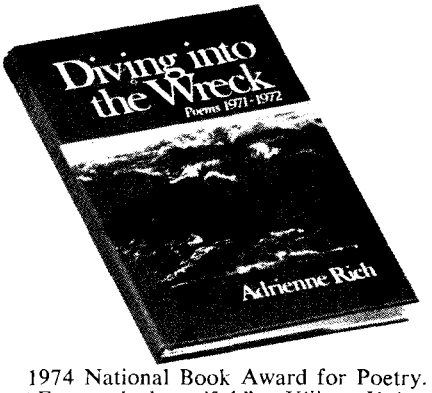

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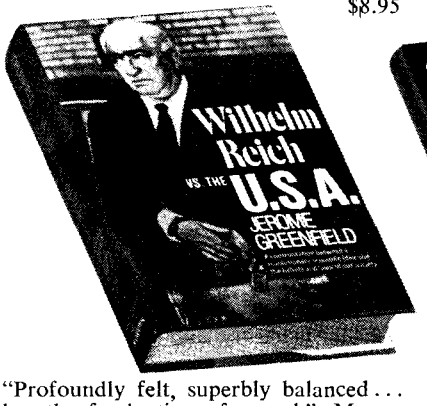

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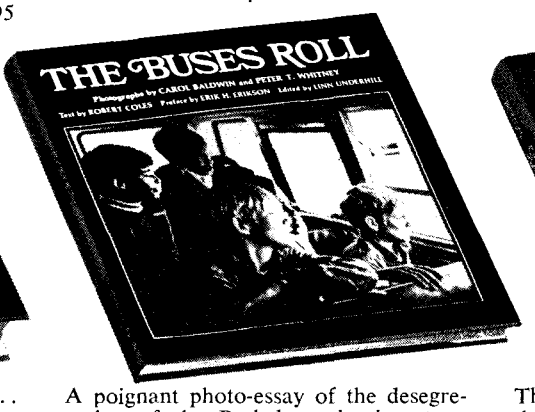

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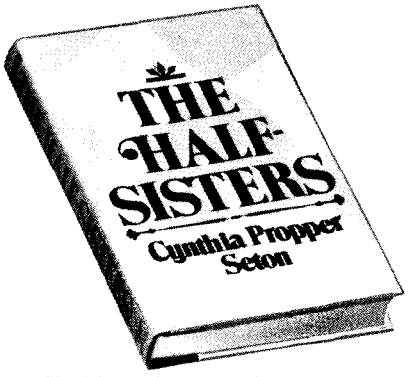

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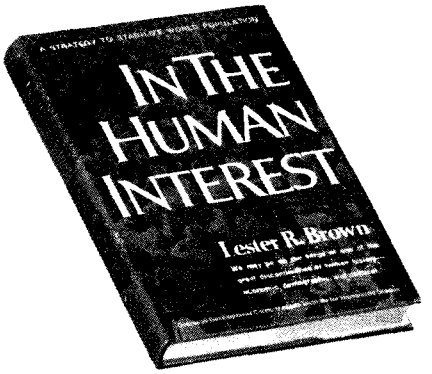

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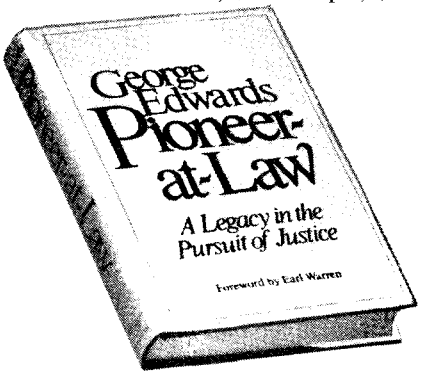

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ever, of the fact that Moses diverted a highway around working-class Astoria, or that he later constructed the Long Island Expressway along the alignment that had originally been designated for the Northern State Parkway. Again, we hear much about Moses's hostility to mass transit, but nary a word about his recommendation in 1951 that the state take over the Long Island Railroad, or his role in converting the dilapidated LIRR Rockaway Line into a part of the New York City subway system. Perhaps the most far-fetched of Caro's theories is the charge that Moses's parkway overpasses were deliberately made low not for reasons of economy, or aesthetics, or to discourage trucks—but to keep out buses!

Caro maintains that Moses's highways have "ruined" Long Island (echoing nicely the sentiments and interests of privileged North Shore residents) and attempts to prove it by a long, tedious section on the horrors of Long Island traffic, down to a description of the room in which traffic-volume maps are displayed, and the colors employed to designate the various levels. Actually, the problem on Long Island is not too many highways, but too few. Nassau County, which is fifteen miles wide, has only three superhighways abreast, while southern Westchester, with the same density and a width of ten miles, has six abreast.

WITH all the space squandered on superfluous detail, it is not surprising that much of Moses's career has been left out. No mention is made, for example, of Moses's service on Al Smith's city-charter revision committee and the Emergency Civil Works Committee of 1933, or of his important contributions to the work of the Hoover Commission. Perhaps his most important project, the St. Lawrence power complex, is barely mentioned in passing, and a chapter on the Westchester parkways, which apparently existed at one time, to judge by references in the text, seems to have been lost. Instead, a good deal of space is given over to Moses's 1914 Ph.D. dissertation, which advocated an English-style civil service; Caro sees this as further proof of Moses's anti-democratic bias, in apparent ignorance of the fact that "elitist" thought of this stripe was common to Progressives of the early part of the century.

History, in any case, is not Caro's strong point. He perpetuates the myth that religious bigotry caused Al Smith's defeat for the Presidency; in the course of a single superfluous sentence on the origins of the Ford Motor Company he commits no fewer than four distinct errors of fact. Nor do contemporary matters fare much better. Though Caro once was a reporter for Long Island's *Newsday*, he does not seem to know that local governments in New York State are called Towns, not Townships; that Oyster Bay is not a Village; that Nelson Rockefeller resigned the governorship in 1973,

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not 1974. In a more theoretical realm, Caro offers an ingenious account of how the construction of the Cross-Bronx Expressway resulted in the collapse of the working-class Jewish neighborhood of East Tremont and its takeover by poor blacks, without troubling to ask why other neighborhoods along the expressway alignment were not similarly blighted (he might have found that the highway had nothing to do with the collapse of that particular neighborhood).

More serious than such slipshod practices, however, is the book's consistent tendency to issue defamatory charges without substantiation. While rifling Cleveland Rodgers's informative and quite well-balanced earlier biography, Caro is not above calling Rodgers a shill for Moses, and implying that Moses bought Rodgers's vote on the City Planning Commission by permitting him to write it. By far the worst of such charges are reserved for Moses himself, and are based for the most part on purloined documents, anonymous sources, and interviews with the dead.*

THE wonder of it is that even from this biased account, Moses manages to emerge as a model public administrator—tireless, fanatically attentive to detail, vastly knowledgeable in the areas of law, finance, and politics, and competent to evaluate engineering, architecture, and site design. Beyond all this he was a genius at public relations and—for all his vaunted enmities—very good at getting the most capable people available to work with him. Like J. Edgar Hoover, to whom he has been compared, Moses is in the tradition of the great public entrepreneurs, a type which includes Neudoerffer of Volkswagen, Mattei

* How credible these are may be judged from the case of Allyn Jennings, a former lieutenant of Moses's, since retired, cited in Caro's book as one of Moses's last independent subordinates who had his career wrecked for daring to criticize Moses's failure to blackout the lights at Jones Beach during World War II. I have known Jennings for many years; he assures me the story is a complete fabrication.

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of Italy's ENI, and Admiral Rickover—highly effective men who are also said to be hard-driving, autocratic, and sometimes nasty in their dealings with other people. A serious study might well investigate why the successful administration of bureaucracies seems to favor such men.

External factors played a major role in Moses's career. The Depression supplied him with gifted people who would otherwise have been in private business, and the need to make work made his labor-intensive attention to detail desirable. More important, Moses was the first grand master of grantsmanship; most of the financing for his great projects came from the federal government. But the main factor in Moses's success was his competence; this was why he was given such enormous responsibilities by so many public officials of the most diverse types, many of whom, according to Caro, disliked him intensely. Any one of these officials could have removed Moses at any time, but they did not choose to do so. His most potent weapon against politicians was the threat of resignation. At the age of seventy-four, he tried the ploy once too often. Nelson Rockefeller accepted his resignations, and that was the end of Robert Moses.

THE most unattractive aspect of Moses's career was his consistent use of a single tactic. He recognized that in any project, however useful, there will always be a conflict between the regional interest and the local interest. No matter how beneficial the proposed highway, airport, or public-housing project will be to the region or city as a whole, its immediate neighborhood is bound to suffer, and will resist the intrusion. Moses, representing the regional interest, operated on the principle of *fait accompli*—preparing every detail in advance and pushing through a proposed project before local resistance could be effectively mobilized. This tactic can often have ugly repercussions; but it is very difficult to get things done any other way.

There is a photograph in *The Power Broker* of a horrendous traffic jam on the Henry Hudson Parkway resulting from the recent closing-off of the West Side Highway. Moses did not build the West Side Highway, nor was he responsible for its maintenance. Who was? We don't know. No one seems to be responsible. No heads rolled when the highway, after deteriorating to the point of collapse, was finally closed off, and no plans had been made to repair or replace it. Only when the residents of adjacent Riverside Drive protested, quite rightly, against serving as a traffic detour, did the City began to act, and the Jane Jacobites a few miles further south began mobilizing to block any positive action. It will be years before the West Side Highway is back in operation, if ever. We do not have people like Moses around anymore, and things don't seem to be working very well.

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Reading *The Power Broker* is tedious, unpleasant, and a waste of time. Only a certain commercial intelligence informs the work. A fat book is considered authoritative, definitive, "important." *The Power Broker* is designed to pander to this year's conventional wisdom on the "urban crisis"; it is hostile to economic growth, to technology, to the automobile, to public housing, to anyone in government, to the masses unless they are nonwhite or "ethnic." Ordinary vulgarity is also served—sexual innuendo, "inside" gossip, the delights of having the mighty pulled down. The success of the merchandising is evidenced by the generally enthusiastic reviews the product has received. One hopes that a scholarly study of Moses will soon appear to redress the pernicious influence of this shameful book.

Soviet Jews

THE LAST EXODUS. By LEONARD SCHROETER. *Universe Books. 432 pp. $10.95.*

Reviewed by MAURICE FRIEDBERG

LEONARD SCHROETER'S *The Last Exodus* ranks among the important books of Jewish interest in recent years. As the principal legal assistant to Israel's attorney general from early 1970 to mid-1972—that is, at the height of the influx of Soviet immigrants to Israel—Schroeter, an American lawyer now back in Seattle, "did little else except work with problems associated with Soviet Jews and the human-rights movement in the USSR." The book consists, in effect, of the contents of his files during this period, and contains a wealth of interviews, correspondence, and other first-hand documents which are an invaluable source of information for anyone concerned with recent Jewish or, for that matter, Soviet history. Interspersed with this factual material are moving accounts of suffering, heroism, hope, and occasional disenchantment.

Schroeter's book is made up for the most part of individual case histories, a method which proves less disjointed in its total effect than one might expect; taken together, the separate accounts provide a sound basis for more general observations. The case-study approach is helpful, for example, on the vexed question of Soviet statistics. Some writers, including this reviewer, have maintained that the number of Jews reported by the Soviet census of 1970—2,151,000—was probably artificially deflated in order to minimize the dimensions of the country's "Jewish problem." Like others, Schroeter can only express misgivings about the official figure and make guesses about the real one. Yet in the separate chapters devoted to each of the various major centers of Jewish population in the USSR, informants in nearly every case disputed the official figure for their particular city, and insisted that the real figure was much higher. (In Moscow, for instance, Schroeter points out that the latest census claimed 240,000 Jews in a city of over 7 million, while Moscow's Jews estimate their number at between 350,000 and 500,000.)

Another striking fact which emerges from these individual accounts is the large number of half-Jews as well as the high incidence of intermarriage among Jewish activists in the USSR, particularly unexpected in the light of both official and popular anti-Semitism. Schroeter's capsule biographies of Soviet-Jewish dissenters trace some of the fascinating ways in which these men and women, nearly all of them young and almost without exception initially illiterate about Jewish matters, moved toward an intense awareness of their Jewishness. Ultimately they were to forsake their careers, their friends, and sometimes even their families, frequently risking imprisonment into the bargain—all in the hope that they might somehow succeed in reaching Israel. Schroeter describes the few books (all, naturally, illegal) that provided Russia's Jewish activists with spiritual nourishment: a Hebrew-language primer, a pre-revolutionary volume of Jewish history, and, most

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curiously, two novels by living American writers, Howard Fast's *My Glorious Brothers* and Leon Uris's *Exodus*. In any future history of 20th-century Russian Jewry, Uris's book about the birth of the State of Israel may come to occupy the same place that *Uncle Tom's Cabin* does in the annals of the American Civil War period.

SCHROETER's book is not only an addition to the growing literature on the Soviet-Jewish dissident movement. It is also an unusually frank personal statement of a dilemma which has not to my knowledge been expressed before, and one which is bound to evoke controversy. Schroeter writes:

> I am a Zionist and feel strongly attached to Israel and its people. But I am also an American, a Jew, and a truth-seeker. Thus, a major difficulty in commencing this book stems from my unwillingness to say anything that might be perceived by anyone as being hurtful to Israel. But I have an even stronger reluctance to say anything that is untrue or unfactual *or to omit anything that is true, factual, and relevant to the subject* [emphasis added].

The question Schroeter poses is a difficult one, and there will certainly be voices raised disputing the compatibility of his two equally worthy aspirations. To show just how complex the problem is, let me cite a few examples.

Schroeter is dismayed by the shroud of secrecy that Israel maintains over such ostensibly innocent data as the absolute number of immigrants from the USSR and their composition—their breakdown by age, for example. He finds it particularly appalling that this secrecy is jealously guarded at both ends of the emigration lifeline, with the Soviets refusing to provide data on the Jews that leave, and the Israelis on those that arrive. As a veteran journalist and civil libertarian (he was long associated with the American Civil Liberties Union) Schroeter is of course unwilling to acquiesce in such suppression of evidence and quite properly attempts to reconstruct the figures as best he can. Yet one need not be either particularly enamored of Israel's bureaucracy or particularly sympathetic to the Soviet Union to realize that both countries have quite legitimate reasons for their reticence.

Thus, Schroeter discusses many factors that influence the flow of Soviet emigrants to Israel, but mentions only in passing a most crucial one: the vociferous opposition to Jewish emigration by the Soviet Union's Arab clients, who correctly see in it a gain for Israel's economic and military potential. Does it not stand to reason, therefore, that the USSR would rather refrain from publicizing the issue altogether, let alone from divulging such details as the true numbers of emigrants of draft age or with special skills? And by the same token, can one really blame the Israelis for not making public information that would assuredly be exploited by the Arabs? Granted, such secretiveness is not the norm in the U.S.; but then, few Jews in Moscow or Israelis in Jerusalem can easily comprehend the attitudes of liberal Americans on such matters as, say, the Pentagon Papers trial, attitudes they generally consider irresponsible. The issue is not solely one of relative attachment to libertarian principles. One must also recognize the validity of Israel's very real apprehensions which place restraints on the principle of public disclosure.

Yet another illustration of the same dilemma is provided by a fascinating chapter in Schroeter's book dealing with the celebrated Leningrad trial of December 1970 in which a group of young people (including, significantly, two non-Jews and one half-Jew) were charged with attempting to hijack a Soviet aircraft. Two of the defendants were sentenced to death and most of the others to long prison terms—a verdict which resulted in a worldwide outcry that subsequently brought about a commutation of the death sentences.

We now learn that prior to the unsuccessful attempt to seize the airplane the members of the group had prepared a collective testa-

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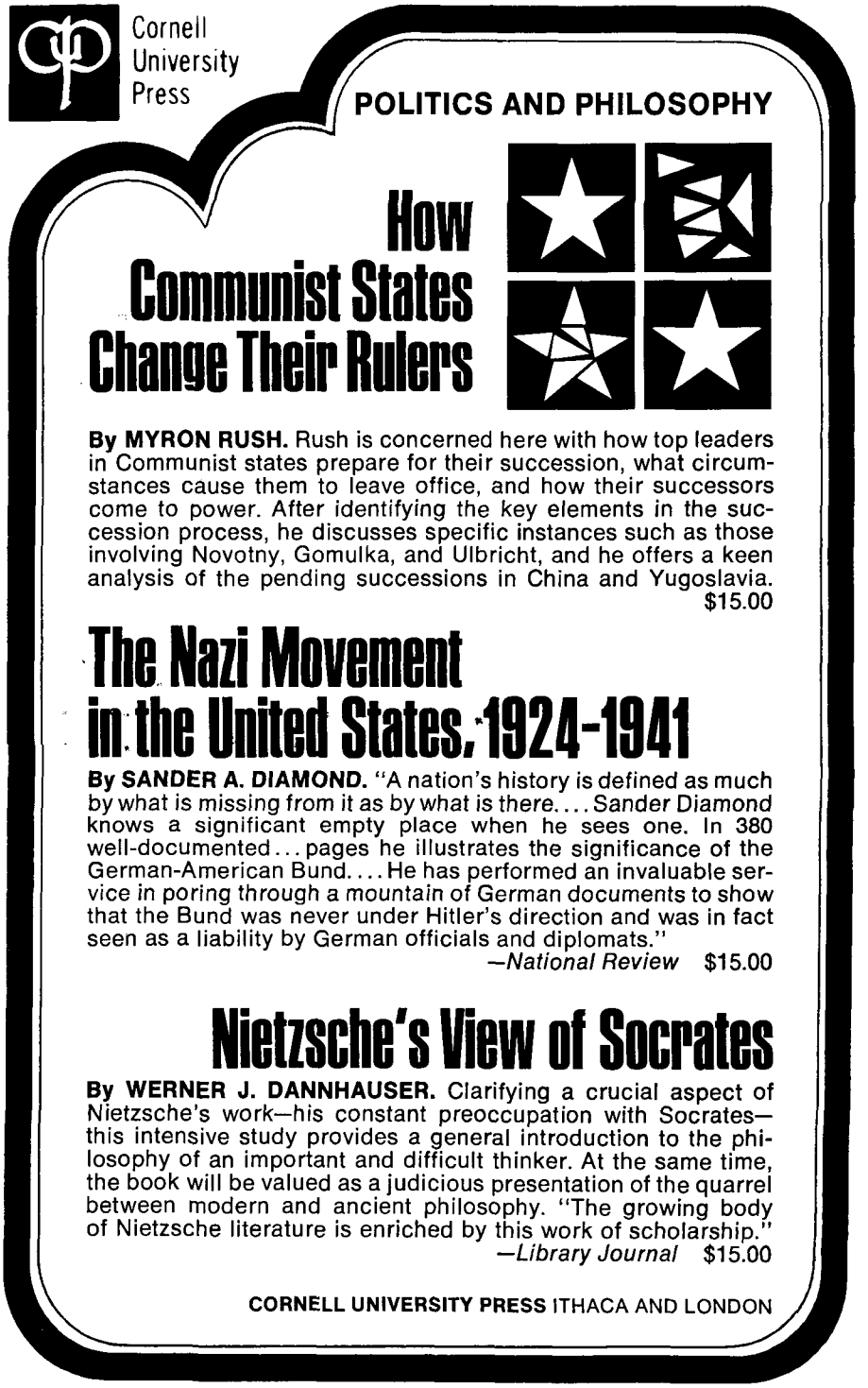
ment which was to be made public only in the event of their deaths. The essence of the document was an admission that the undertaking was a desperate act, and that it was intended to focus international attention on the tragic plight of Soviet Jews prevented from going to Israel. Yet, curiously enough, although the text of the statement was at the time of the trial in the hands of the Soviet security police, of the Israeli authorities, and of some Jewish activists within the USSR, they *all* chose to suppress it. Why?

> The KGB had a copy but never introduced it at the trial—presumably because it indicated, among other things, no intent to harm the plane's pilot and a lack of motivation to do more than to leave the USSR without permission. . . . Israeli statements and the declarations of Jewish organizations in the West denied that there had ever been any hijacking attempt at all. They claimed the hijacking had been a KGB fabrication. . . . But the Israeli government did know about the hijacking plans before the attempt occurred, *although it did what it could to discourage the effort,* and it was less than candid for Israel to deny the facts [emphasis added].

One likely reason for Israel's course of action, however ill-advised, was her unique interest in the suppression of all air terrorism, an interest shared by Schroeter. Yet there was also perhaps the apprehension, eminently justified by past experience, that Israel's admission of *any* role in the affair—in this case of her efforts to *prevent* the hijacking attempt from materializing—would be maliciously distorted by Soviet propaganda as evidence of Israel's complicity and approval. Which of the two unpleasant choices was preferable in these circumstances we will never know.

PERHAPS the most painful moral issue Schroeter discusses concerns the relationship among Israel, the Soviet Zionists, and the democratic-dissent movement in the Soviet Union. Numerically weak and brutally persecuted by the Soviet authorities, the democratic dissenters have from the beginning symbolized to the country's Jews the "other Russia," the one that would treat all of her citizens with decency, justice, and compassion. The attractiveness of the democratic movement to Russia's Jews was moreover heightened by the fact that some *other* dissenters, particularly the nationalists, were no less anti-Semitic than the Soviet authorities themselves. An exceptionally high number of activists in the Soviet democratic movement are either themselves Jews or are married to Jews (in Schroeter's estimate, some 60 to 70 per cent!). For its part, the democratic movement has over the years steadfastly supported Jewish aspirations even when adherence to principle damaged its own cause: after all, the departure of tens of thousands of Jews dangerously depleted the ranks of dissidents. Not surprisingly, in view of all this, many Soviet Jews upon arriving in Israel have attempted to help the friends and comrades they left behind—only to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discover to their dismay that Israeli authorities actually attempt to hinder such efforts. Many have also been angered by the apparent effort of Israel's information services to establish a clear division in the public mind between the "anti-Soviet" aims of Russia's democrats and the "apolitical" goal of the Soviet Zionist movement—simple emigration. Whatever their personal sympathies, new arrivals have been told, they have to realize that Israel cannot afford to become the world center of anti-Soviet activity.

Some of the incidents cited by Schroeter in this connection make depressing reading, and a few of the policy decisions he describes belong in the category of morally questionable acts committed by a sovereign state on grounds of cold *raison d'état*. Such decisions may be indefensible on strict moral grounds. One may, however, argue that as a weak and vulnerable country, Israel can less afford the risks of an absolutist stand on this issue than could some more powerful country. Distasteful though such a consideration is, it cannot simply be brushed aside. Where one *can* agree with Schroeter, though, is in his indignation at the equally reprehensible tactics of non-governmental agencies in the West—agencies presumably unhampered by considerations of *Realpolitik*—who have been extremely selective in their efforts to mobilize public opinion on behalf of "prisoners of conscience" in the USSR, championing cases which accord with their own criteria and allowing others, no less worthy, to languish.

Whatever the ultimate fate of Soviet dissent in general, it becomes clear from Schroeter's book, as well as from accumulating evidence from other sources, that despite continued public protestations by the Soviet authorities, they have gradually come to regard Israel's concern for the fate of fellow Jews in the USSR as quasi-legitimate, much as they have, in recent years, allowed the "repatriation" of Soviet citizens of Polish origin to Poland and of descendants of 18th-century German settlers to Germany—West Germany, to be precise. The Jewish emigration movement represents the single most successful effort in all of Soviet history to sway government policy by combined outside and inside pressure—eventually the importance of this fact will be appreciated.

What of the future? Not surprisingly, recent Soviet immigrants to Israel are pessimistic about the prospects for a viable Jewish life in the USSR. In their view, Jews intent on remaining in the Soviet Union are doomed to disappear as a distinct group; the evidence they offer on this point is grimly persuasive. Yet should we in fact be so quick to write off those Jews who will remain in Russia, whether by choice or involuntarily, as irretrievably lost to the Jewish people? Were not many of us similarly ready, a mere two decades ago, to give up for lost the Jews of the USSR—and if not all of them, then at least the younger generation? For that matter, is the present Jewish exodus from the USSR, even if it comes to a temporary halt, really the last, as Schroeter's title suggests? Who would have suspected, after the departure of most of Poland's surviving Jews in 1957, that in 1968 there would be another Jewish exodus from Communist Poland, a departure of a few remaining thousand people of Jewish ancestry who were as Polish as any of the Poles and more Communist than most?

Culture and Country

LOVE-HATE RELATIONS: A STUDY OF ANGLO-AMERICAN SENSIBILITIES. By STEPHEN SPENDER. *Random House. 246 pp. $8.95.*

Reviewed by RENEE WINEGARTEN

STEPHEN SPENDER'S *Love-Hate Relations* can be taken in at least two ways. First it may be seen as a rather winding and idiosyncratic survey of the ever-changing stresses of the Anglo-American cultural dilemma, a survey more con-

RENEE WINEGARTEN *is the author of* Writers and Revolution *(Franklin Watts).*

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vincing, perhaps, in fine detail than general analysis. (And significantly, Spender, the translator of Schiller and Hölderlin, cannot always contrive to keep England and Europe apart.) The unexpected metaphors make up for a certain carelessness and impatience which the lyric poet has always shown when writing prose. Second, the book may be viewed as a summation of the author's own critical attitudes and doubts, as the personal statement of a poet who—since the death of Louis MacNeice, Cecil Day Lewis, and W. H. Auden—remains the last prestigious survivor of the committed Oxonian poetic generation of the 30's.

The first part of the book, which examines what Emerson at one stage saw as England's cultural advantage over America, covers territory which has already been well explored. Henry James appears as Spender's key figure, "center of the English-American language." For James, despite his awareness of the pros and cons on both sides, conceived the English-American world as "a big Anglo-Saxon total," and aspired to write in such a way that an outsider would be unable to tell whether he were an American writing about England or an Englishman writing about America.

This civilized ambiguity was, of course, an ideal which not even James himself could realize, an ideal which inevitably receded as the Anglo-Saxon element ceased to predominate in the United States. Besides, if T.S. Eliot, royalist and Anglo-Catholic though he was, could be called (with revealing ignorance) an overeducated American who should have "stayed in Louisville, or wherever he came from," W. H. Auden was not exactly convincing as an American either, and returned to Oxford at the last. The charm for the reader, wherever he is placed, surely lies in the subtle (and not so subtle) differences between English and American authors, rather than in any cultural cross-breed, or *Amereng* (Spender's happy coinage).

Spender's account of Pound and Eliot (despite its indebtedness to American writers) assumes a very English tinge. Following James in quest of the civilization they felt to be lacking at home, they arrived in the England of the Georgian poets at a moment that could only lead to their own disillusion. The point of Anglo-American division was, in Spender's opinion, the 1914-18 war: the American pair succeeded in disturbing English complacency, but they remained essentially spectators while poets like Wilfred Owen, whom they never appreciated, were fighting and dying in the trenches. Spender who (with Auden) has always cared deeply for Owen's poetry, movingly illuminates its prophetic insight. He also challenges with vigor Pound's influential lines on soldierly sacrifice for an old bitch gone in the teeth, a botched civilization, suggesting that the English war poets saw themselves as fighting for "gentleness" rather than civilization, for values that were internal rather than external.

From poetry, Spender passes to a familiar juxtaposition of his, the "poet-novelists," including Virginia Woolf, E.M. Forster, D.H. Lawrence, as compared with those novelists who merely reflect prose life (Arnold Bennett, Upton Sinclair). He considers how the "poet-novelists" examine the condition of the English in terms of his favorite quotation from Auden's *The Orators*: "What do you think about England, this country of ours where nobody is well?" Thence he proceeds, by way of the American expatriates of the interwar years, to weigh the post-1945 American cultural advantage, which finds many an English intellectual attracted to American vitality and fascinated by American writers whose reach is often greater than their grasp. (This infatuation, it is true, has faded somewhat in the light of the Vietnam war and Watergate.)

It may well be that Spender's tendency to interpret English and American literary conditions as a kind of strenuous cultural tennis match, with the advantage passing

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from one side to the other, derives from the impact of the sensational departure of Auden and Isherwood for America in 1939. The question for Spender was: could they produce better work in the United States than in England? Ten years after, in an essay in *Horizon*, he found that the English writer was still enjoying several advantages over his American colleague. Clearly, since then, he has changed his mind.

So, the situation with which Spender began, where English writers like Matthew Arnold could find nothing of cultural interest in the former colony, is now ironically reversed when American poets and critics can regard current English literature, epitomized by the poems of Philip Larkin, as provincial and as small beer. However, it ought to be said that much fine —and pleasurable—creative work has often been accomplished in Britain by isolated figures who do not choose to throw their hats into "the heavyweight ring" (A. Alvarez's Maileresque phrase). One thinks of poets from Cowper to R. S. Thomas.

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The logic of Spender's twists and turns, though not always immediately obvious, may be sought in the fact that the literary territory he explores here is very largely the one he has been traversing and retraversing since his first work of criticism, *The Destructive Element*, in 1935. His criticism, with an occasional backward glance to Elizabethans or Romantics, often seems to radiate from family or personal experience. A relative of his was acquainted with Henry James, we are told. He himself knew the Georgian poets through his uncle, J. A. Spender, editor of the *Westminster Gazette*, who published their work. His own idea of poetry, before he fell under Auden's influence at Oxford, was not dissimilar to that of the Georgian poets, since he felt then that there existed a poetic world separate from the real world. He met Yeats at tea at Lady Ottoline Morrell's, lunched with Eliot, dined with Virginia Woolf, and later visited Pound in his Washington hospital with Robert Lowell. Spender's continuing interest in the same writers, especially Virginia Woolf, Lawrence, and Eliot, dates from his undergraduate days.

So does his declaration of love for the gentle English countryside shaped by the action of many centuries. Picnicking with Auden on a hilltop near Oxford, on "the most English day of our relationship," he perceived that the landscape looked "polished by innumerable suns rising in the island sky, which seemed to have preserved intact through many centuries such a day as this, where two undergraduates lay in a high field, talking about poetry, as they might have done in Elizabethan times." This conscious Englishry, which underlies many of his literary judgments, may well have been intensified by the strains arising from his mixed ancestry, Danish and German-Jewish as well as British.

Certainly the word "life," so important in his critical vocabulary —he published an essay with the highly romantic title "Life and the Poet" in 1942—implies the writer's awareness of a connection between his own existence and his country in its history, landscape, and people. In this sense, the country is the "patria," the ideal England or United States by which the writer judges the official nation and the existing society. Without a correct relation to the "patria," the writer's work becomes either peripheral or excessively introspective, alternative fates he has long sought to avoid. "Life," which Spender recognizes as a vague and even dangerous term, is therefore linked in his mind with the sense of the past as a living continuity in the present. Once characterized as a "Romantic of the wildest sort," Spender still retains a pretty romantic conception of the past and its values. Plainly, he loathes the present-day cult of the detached present, regarded as a particularly American contribution to the modern outlook.

In the last section of the work, Spender's perplexity becomes increasingly evident. He is unhappy about many current literary developments on both sides of the Atlantic, some of which are, in reality, wild extensions of his youthful position. What he calls the "orgasmic culture," for instance, goes well beyond the tenets of his own liberator, D. H. Lawrence, and beyond Spender's own early injunction to young comrades to count their "valued sex" and

> advance to rebuild and sleep with
> friend on hill
> advance to rebel. . . .

Since the days of his own revolt against a debased puritanism and his flirtation with Communism, rebellion has both gotten out of hand and become commonplace.

Spender's conclusion, which considers possible English positions in the present unfavorable literary climate, reminds us that this book arose out of Clark lectures delivered at Cambridge. None of the positions suggested—whether studied provincialism, in the style of Larkin or Betjeman; the role of exile belonging to neither country, after Auden; or some vague Lawrentian concept of "life" which is dearer to Spender's own heart—seems particularly inspiring. That the pursuit of "life" may also lead to the extreme, to madness and self-destruction, is nonetheless clear to him. "Perhaps

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the English can maintain distance and sanity," he concludes. That has often been their role, but he does not sound too sanguine about the prospect.

Whether it is entirely satisfactory to generalize about national attitudes to the past (or to anything else), and to discuss English (or European) and American cultural relations in terms of two hundred years of literature, especially poetry and the novel—even within the context of a belief in the social value of the creative imagination—remains questionable. Maybe a longer view, taken for argument's sake from Milton's *Areopagitica*—with its conviction that truth must prevail over falsehood in any "free and open encounter"—might produce a less disjunctive picture of the cultural scene. Still, a book constructed upon Robert Frost's touching remark about his friendship with Edward Thomas—"We were very close. His mockery was my mockery, and we felt the same about war and peace"—would scarcely prove as stimulating as Spender's provocative study. Certainly, it is a work rich enough to provide hints for explorations by others.

Life of a Revolutionary

KARL MARX: HIS LIFE AND THOUGHT. By DAVID MCCLELLAN. *Harper & Row. 498 pp. $12.50.*

Reviewed by CARL GERSHMAN

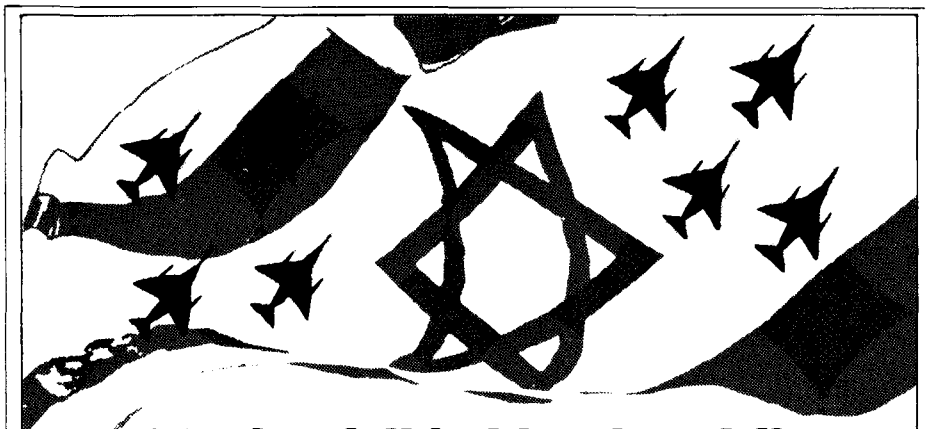
KARL MARX had a very hard life. Born in 1818, he spent virtually his entire political existence in exile from his native Germany. Two of his children died in infancy, one in childhood, and a fourth shortly before Marx's own death in 1883. For many of his most intellectually productive years he was beseiged by creditors and afflicted by a variety of illnesses, the most painful being a near-fatal carbuncular disease that caused him immense suffering during his last twenty years.

Except for a brief period of notoriety after the publication of his *Address on the Paris Commune*, he lived and worked in relative obscurity. His major political undertaking, the International, disintegrated after the fall of the Commune, and Marx was forced to engineer its removal to America (where the International dissolved quietly in 1876) to prevent its takeover by his hated rival, Bakunin. In his own lifetime, his writings received only limited recognition—he once speculated that "*Capital* will not even pay for the cigars I smoked writing it." And in fact, the first edition of 1,000 copies was not sold out for four years. (Ironically, this monumental attempt to describe the genesis of capitalism in Western Europe sold best in "semi-Asiatic" Russia, and only after passing the Czarist censors who felt that "few would read it and still fewer understand it.")

In his last years Marx was an exhausted man in every way. Broken by personal tragedy and political defeat, he had lost his power to synthesize and create. He continued his vast reading, but wrote almost nothing of lasting theoretical value. The last two unpublished volumes of *Capital*, which he had completed in the mid-1860's, he hardly went back to at all, realizing that it would be Engels's task "to make something of it." The manuscripts turned out to be in such disorder that Engels could not publish Volume Three until eleven years after Marx's death.

Such, in brief, was Marx's life as portrayed in David McClellan's excellent new biography—a life marked by extraordinary creativity, struggle, tragedy, and very little success. Just how little is hard for us to imagine, so towering a figure has Marx become since then. Yet if his name is now a household word, his ideas are scarcely better understood today than they were in his own lifetime. Marx himself was thoroughly unimpressed by some of his followers, enough so to declare that "what is certain is that I am no Marxist"; yet even he, so much a man of the future, could not have foreseen anything like the systematic misuse of his thought that has become commonplace in contemporary politics.

CARL GERSHMAN *is executive director of the Social Democrats, U.S.A.*



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Undoubtedly he would have disagreed with Emerson's dictum that "there is properly no history; only biography"—for him, of course, there was only history. But in Marx's own case biography can be a useful means of clarification, enabling us to look at his life and thought directly, without reference to the brutal actions undertaken in his name after 1917. McClellan's biography is important, to begin with, as a dispassionate, comprehensive, and rigorously objective portrait of Marx as he was seen by his contemporaries. It is also the first major biography since Mehring's classic study appeared over fifty years ago—a work which, as McClellan observes, is "slightly hagiographical" and also out of date.

McClellan's book, for example, contains valuable analyses of two works which did not become generally available until after the Mehring biography was published—the 1844 *Paris Manuscripts* (1932) and the *Grundrisse*, which first appeared in German in 1939. The first of these was the starting point for Marx's analysis of alienated labor, while the second McClellan considers to be the link between the early "humanistic" Marx and the fully matured author of *Capital*. Written in six months during the winter of 1857-58, the *Grundrisse* may well be Marx's most important work, the product of fifteen years of research which he called "the best period of my life." It contains the outline of a projected six-volume work on economics—only one of which was ever completed—as well as illuminating digressions on the individual and society, among other subjects, and remarkably prescient passages on automation and leisure time. Since Marx in both these works speaks in rather utopian terms of the development of a "universal," unalienated individual under communism, they have stimulated a wealth of psychological exegesis among Marxian scholars. What they demonstrate in McClellan's view is that for Marx "economics and ethics were inextricably linked."

Marx's intellect has never been in question. Even as a young man in his twenties he overwhelmed people with his intellectual power. "His speech was brief, convincing, and compelling in its logic," Frederick Lessner wrote. No less celebrated than his intellect was his acerbity. To those who saw him from a distance, especially if they were on the opposite side of a political dispute, he appeared both imperious and morose. The American Carl Schurz, for example, wrote that Marx did not accord "the honor of even condescending consideration" to any view that differed from his own. And other sources too corroborate Marx's talent for brilliant (and often delightfully witty) invective. Yet McClellan also shows a gentler side to Marx, quite different from his public personality. To his family and close friends, according to this account, he was warm, open, without vanity, and "truthfulness incarnate," as Wilhelm Liebknecht put it. To his daughter Eleanor he was "the cheeriest and gayest soul that ever breathed." As the "human" side of Marx begins increasingly to emerge, the reader begins to share McClellan's obvious affection for his subject.

In general, McClellan remains the detached observer of his subject, except when he intervenes to refute what in his view represents a clear misreading of Marx. Thus, he disposes very cogently of two of the more prevalent—and contradictory—misreadings of Marx: that his philosophy is a secular religion, with the proletariat "discovered" via revelation and assigned the purpose of collective salvation; and that he was an economic determinist. As McClellan demonstrates, Marx was above all a humanist. "The criticism of religion," he wrote, "ends with the doctrine that man is for himself the highest being. . . ." Far from removing man from the center of reality, historical materialism aided his self-realization by exposing the root of his fantasies, whether religious or ideological. It was Engels, not Marx, who started the process of transforming Marxism from a mode of critical thought into an ideology, a system of laws of so-

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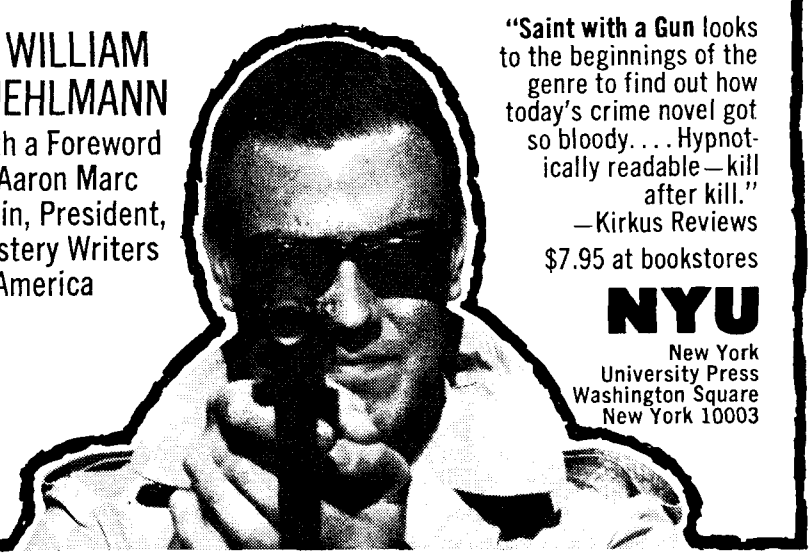

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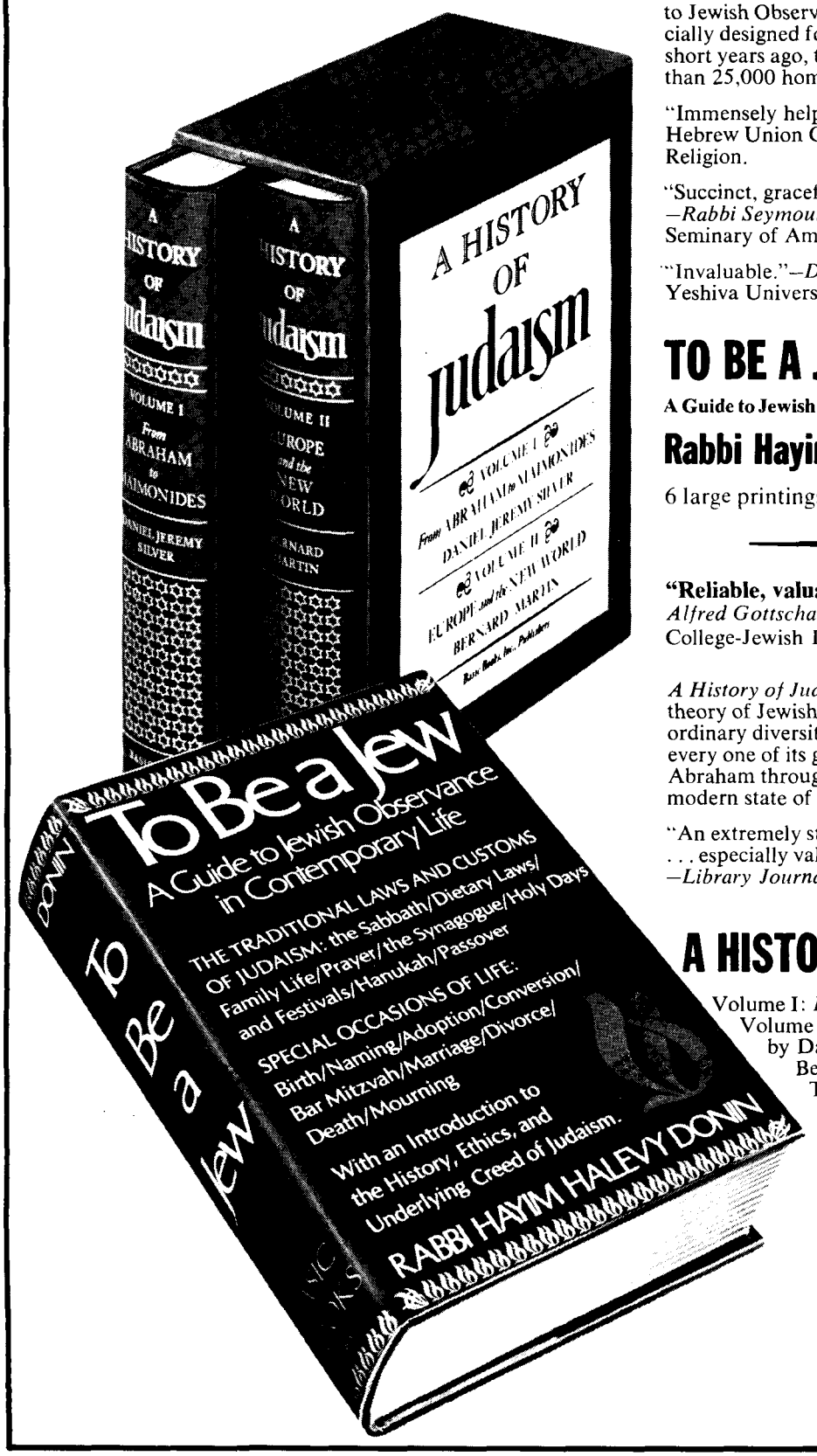
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ciety similar to Darwin's laws of nature. McClellan is not the first writer to point this out of course, but his discussion of the *Grundrisse*, where the problem of alienation is central, should leave no doubts about Marx's humanism.

McClellan also argues that the tendency to view Marx's long-term predictions as having been "disproved" is to misunderstand his economic theory. That theory should not be taken as a scientific treatise, but rather as an analysis of the dynamic of capitalism. As such, it is "to be judged by the insights it gives into the workings of the capitalist system," not by the accuracy of predictions that "are only based on his abstract 'model' of capitalist society, a model capable of almost infinite variation in given circumstances [which] like all models . . . must be assessed by its fruitfulness." The subsequent emergence within the capitalist framework of such variations as mass trade-union movements and mixed-welfare economies in the West may seem to have made the original model obsolete, yet capitalism has hardly lost its capacity, described by Marx in the *Manifesto*, to "revolutionize the instruments of production" or to expand "over the whole surface of the globe." Marx was "wrong," in other words, in the sense that capitalism has not collapsed, but it does not therefore follow that his description of how it works has become irrelevant.

If McClellan is always stimulating when discussing Marx's theoretical work, his treatment of the latter's political activities is less satisfying. Marx was a democratic socialist who opposed illusory shortcuts to socialism, but at several points in his political life he departed from the general line of his thought. One such departure occurred after the unsuccessful revolution of 1848 when Marx advocated "revolutionary terrorism" and subsequently in 1850 formed a brief alliance with the Jacobin Blanqui. A second took place when he wrote his brilliant polemic in defense of the Paris Commune, even though he had correctly predicted before the event that an uprising would be "a desperate folly" which would set back the revolutionary cause "another twenty years," and admitted many years later that the Commune "was not socialist, nor could it have been." Finally, there was the complete reversal of Marx's stance toward the Russian populists. In 1870 he had written contemptuously of "the schoolboy nihilism which is today fashionable among the Russian students." But after the assassination of Alexander II in 1881, he praised the terrorists as "brave people with no melodramatic poses, straightforward, realistic, and heroic." This new political attitude toward Russian populism was accompanied by a theoretical revision, as Marx acknowledged the possibility that in Russia the capitalist phase could be by-passed, with the communal farm constituting the basis for socialism.

McClellan recounts these changes in Marx's thinking rather matter-of-factly, commenting only that his attitude on the Russian question was "fatefully ambivalent." But why did Marx change his attitude toward the populists? Was it out of despair at the prospects of revolution in the West? Or did he mean to lend support to the one group that might weaken Russia, the bulwark of reaction in Europe? These and other questions about Marx's alliance with Blanqui and his uncritical backing of the Commune deserve attention not just because Marx's own revisions have been used by subsequent "Marxists" to justify Jacobinism and terror, but also because they bring out a central element of Marx's personality: he was, after all, a revolutionary who wanted to be in the thick of the fight. (Marx was pleased that his *Address on the Paris Commune* had made him "the most abused and threatened man in London. That really does me good," he wrote, "after the tedious twenty-year idyll in my den.") He fully understood the danger of ultra-leftism and would not give an inch in his struggle with Bakunin. But the failure of that socialist revolution to which he had devoted his life and work led even Marx, if only for brief periods, to accommodate his theories to existing revolutionary possibilities.

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When Marx ended his brief flirtation with "street-fighting socialism" in 1850, he chastised his former allies for putting forward "*Will* . . . as the chief factor in revolution, instead of real relationships." This conflict within Marxism remains real and ongoing. In the West small sects have had a monopoly on revolutionary "will," while the "real relationships" have given rise to the reconstructive politics of social democracy. Yet one reason for the enduring value of Marxism is that its own central principles are the best defense against the Leninist error of attempting to impose socialism by force. One such principle is that no new social order can emerge before "the material conditions of [its] existence have matured in the womb of the old society itself." It was on this basis that the orthodox Marxist Plekhanov predicted in 1884 that revolution through terror in backward Russia would lead "to a political deformity after the image of the Chinese and Peruvian Empire, a renewed Czarist despotism with a Communist lining."

A second principle, anathema to all revolutionary "vanguards," is that "The emancipation of the working classes must be achieved by the working classes themselves." He who prefers to make the revolution *in the name of* the working classes may not be satisfied with the course they have chosen, but so be it. They continue to push ahead in their own way and at their own pace. Certainly Marx, unlike some of his "followers," would have been the last to deny them their right to the choice.

Day Care in America

WHO'S MINDING THE CHILDREN? By MARGARET STEINFELS. *Simon & Schuster. 281 pp.. $8.95.*

Reviewed by
STEVEN SCHLOSSMAN

"PEOPLE seem to feel that because children are little things, they are of little consequence"—so observed Boston's Infant School Society in 1828 in its abortive effort to stir public interest and secure government financing for its enterprise. The lament is a familiar one in the history of American urban education. Today, as in the early 19th century, educators and reformers generally trace family disorganization, poverty, and delinquency to perverse early learning experiences in slums, and inveigh against legislators and bureaucrats who fail to recognize the urgency and potency of their remedial programs. One persistent plea has epitomized reformist thinking right up to the present: "if only we could have intervened in time." But for better or worse, individual parental prerogatives in this area have remained fairly firm, and Americans have never made a place for the very young child in their millennial vision of public education. This has by and large been true of the latest reform movement in this area as well: day care.

Day care replaced Operation Head Start as the liveliest child-welfare issue of the early 70's. Advocates of the measure mistakenly placed all their eggs in the basket of the Comprehensive Child Development Act and for a while public sponsorship seemed doomed when President Nixon, in a sharp veto of the act, portrayed day care as the opening wedge of an assault on American morals. Additional unanticipated attacks from the Left and a few minority spokesmen—the former on the grounds that day care facilitated "wage slavery," the latter on the grounds that it represented cultural insensitivity to blacks—also hampered organization and effective lobbying and served further to stifle the initial enthusiasm of many who had naively believed that the "rights of children" somehow transcended politics.

Though scarred by defeat and troubled by criticism, the day-care movement during the past year or so has become increasingly active on both national and local levels. It has found secure niches at several universities, notably Syracuse, North Carolina, and Michigan State. The recent establishment of several semi-scholarly child-care journals, plus a growing stream of books by psychologists, wom-

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en's liberationists, and journalists should guarantee greater interest and help bring increased pressure on governmental agencies to take action.

"Day care is an idea whose time has come," writes Margaret Steinfels. "This does not necessarily mean it is a good idea, but simply that it is on the national agenda." But Steinfels emphatically believes that day care *is* a good idea, and she offers a variety of thoughtful arguments in its favor. Having seen the movement through its ups and downs, she is wiser and humbler for early frustrations; her book is at once a manifesto and a chronicle of her own blasted dreams.

Drawing upon her travels to day-care centers throughout the country, Steinfels describes an array of personnel, systems of pedagogy, and physical settings which defy simple generalization. For those unfamiliar with the variety of already existing day-care practices, the information is enlightening. It turns out, for instance, that the most common form of day care is the unlicensed family kind—baby-sitting in neighborhood homes for small groups of youngsters. This represents the antithesis of what Steinfels repeatedly terms, without ever quite defining it, "quality day care"; unable to wait for public initiatives, low-income working mothers leave babies and toddlers with untrained neighbors who charge only minimal fees and provide wholly custodial services.

Steinfels's principal concern, however, is not description but politics, history, and social philosophy. She contends that large-scale public day care is likely to become a reality because three new and powerful interest groups want it. First are the designers of Nixonian welfare policy who hope to use day care to force welfare mothers into the labor market, or at least curtail welfare cheating by the threat to do so. Second are the behavioral scientists whose recent research with pre-school youngsters suggests, first, that frequent mother-child separation does not necessarily cause irreparable emotional damage, and, second, that the quality of early "learning environments" sets severe limitations on cognitive

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potential. Third are the great mass of American middle-class housewives who, Steinfels contends, have been influenced by the Women's Liberation movement to seek gainful employment. (A fourth, but older and less powerful group are low-income women who have entered the work force in increasing numbers since World War II.) An important if implicit warning runs throughout her political analysis: even after day care comes under public aegis, battles for influence will just have begun, and it is not at all clear yet which group will wield the greatest political clout.

In light of the historical vacuum in which education- and welfare-policy debate so frequently takes place, Steinfels's survey of the origins of day care in America is particularly valuable. Though she exaggerates the extent of popular and Congressional approval for day care during World War II, she deals very intelligently with shifting sources of support and opposition from the 1890's onward, and appraises the motivations, objectives, and techniques of Progressive social reformers more sympathetically than most recent historians:

> The day nursery ladies are easily enough criticized for their *noblesse oblige,* their condescension, the foisting of their own values upon the poor. . . . It is nonetheless remarkable that, given their limited class interest and narrow experience, these women managed to create the American day nursery. In retrospect their creation seems flexible, practical, and, above all, genuinely responsive to the needs of working mothers.

Steinfels combines her keen political sense with a romantic and nostalgic social philosophy. Her views on the good life derive mainly from a selective portrait of family forms and functions in 17th-century America. She incorporates John Demos's conception of the colonial New England household as "a little commonwealth," yet neglects what Demos has to say about the extent and bitterness of inter-family rivalries. While she sees no prospect of recreating the "little commonwealth" in metro-America, she appears to believe that through day care we can reknit at least one stitch of that seamless web of social relationships which sustained colonial households:

> A day care system, neighborhood-based, community-oriented, and parent-controlled, could go a long way toward giving families the Family they need to belong to. As an autonomous unit the family cannot long survive the pressures it now experiences; as one of many units in which there is a shared concern for children the family could meet its own need and enlarge our capacities for raising children and making human beings human.

Clearly, then, Steinfels's policy recommendations seek to strengthen, not weaken, the nuclear family. Unlike such radical critics as R. D. Laing and David Cooper, she considers the family an essential and meaningful, if not entirely irreplaceable, source of emotional gratification for both children and adults, and a lonely bulwark against the values of a consumer culture.

DESPITE its virtues, *Who's Minding the Children?* deals inadequately with a number of complex issues. For instance, Steinfels minimizes the potential for disagreement among middle- and lower-class parents concerning the question of who should have first access to public day care. Other commentators, however, have noted real and persistent conflicts. Marian Wright Edelman, director of the Children's Defense Fund, has reported how fights nearly broke out at a meeting of the National Organization for Women when a middle-class mother asked for equal access to day care so that she could have afternoons free to visit art galleries. Certainly Diane Ravitch's account, in *The Great School Wars,* of New York's experience in educating the children of ethnically, racially, and socially diverse parents would give little ground for imagining that ingrained prejudices can be overcome simply by invoking the "rights of children." And the likelihood that the great majority of public day-care centers will be racially segregated should only exacerbate the potential for conflict and create intriguing constitutional issues: does day care fall under the *Brown* v. *Board of Education* ruling? Should children under age five or six be bused? Can day-care instructors form separate unions?

Satisfied that the latest evidence from psychologists supports her own preference for expanded day care, Steinfels also never addresses the broader issue of how to integrate behavioral-science knowledge into public policy. At times she seems all too willing to pounce upon the latest laboratory experiments and declare them the new conventional wisdom. Despite her avid endorsement, it seems prudent to wait a little longer before discarding John Bowlby and Anna Freud (not to mention Dr. Spock), or before embracing unequivocally the argument that "maternal deprivation" is largely a myth, or that half of a child's cognitive ability—whatever we mean by that —is fully developed by age five or less. Steinfels's own attempt to resolve some of these perplexities is hardly satisfactory. She asserts that expansion or contraction of day care is basically a political rather than a behavioral-science issue. In fact, however, she has tied her "politics" irrevocably to the fate of newer trends in child psychology by describing the aims of "quality day care" as "developmental" as opposed to custodial. Within the next few years a new generation of avant-garde psychologists may thoroughly undermine the thrust of her book by reinstating psychoanalytic emphases or, more likely, challenging the present-day obsession with cognition.

Finally, Steinfels never convincingly answers the charge that day care is incidental, a poor substitute for more far-reaching social reforms. One need not agree with the ultimate viewpoints of such analysts as Richard Cloward, Christopher Jencks, or Colin Greer to recognize how steadfastly Americans have opposed plans to reduce poverty by increasing income benefits, providing training opportunities to heads of families, or offering direct assistance, advice, and supplies to poor parents seek-

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ing to improve their own "learning environments." Instead, we have consistently by-passed the home and placed all our bets on the public school or other outside agencies such as boys' clubs, social settlements, and day care.

Is it not time perhaps to question this traditional investment, emotional as much as financial, in outside agencies over the home? Is day care really the best option available for strengthening the capacity of lower-class parents to rear their own children? And even if it is, we ought to recall that Progressive social reformers made sure to complement day care with extensive programs for instructing impoverished minority parents in the best "scientific" nurture advice then available. We ought at least to consider the pros and cons of doing the same, before creating a massive new institutional network and turning early child care for the poor over to a new group of "professionals" whose experience and expertise have yet to be adequately tested.

Military Law

JUSTICE UNDER FIRE. By JOSEPH W. BISHOP, JR. *Charterhouse. 315 pp. $8.95.*

Reviewed by WILLIAM J. BENNETT

IN RECENT years, for reasons having to do largely with U.S. military conduct in the Vietnam war, public discussion has focused in a particularly heated fashion on the question of military justice. Robert Sherrill's book of 1971, *Military Justice is to Justice as Military Music is to Music,* summed up the position of many critics who believe that "military justice" is a contradiction in terms. As against these, it is Joseph Bishop's thesis in *Justice Under Fire* that the presence of enormous power in the military has not entailed, and need not entail, the absence of right or justice. Bishop attacks the view that military law is only arbitrariness in uniform, and he does so gracefully, persuasively, and with ample evidence to support his arguments.

WILLIAM J. BENNETT *teaches law and philosophy at Boston University.*

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A notable strength of the book is that Bishop directly addresses the hard issues, all the counts in the indictment of the military's harshest critics.

Bishop insists that military law is not "a debasement and corruption of the ordinary criminal process" but is "a very gradual and still partial homologization of civilian criminal justice by a penal system with totally different purposes and origins." There is, first of all, a constitutional basis and foundation for military law. The Constitution that authorizes Congress to provide for the common defense, to declare war, and to raise armies authorizes it also to make rules for the government and regulation of the armed forces. Articles of war developed and refined through the course of the nation's experience have been brought together in the Uniform Code of Military Justice. The Code has its problems, which Bishop recognizes; he proposes changes where appropriate, yet on the whole he gives the Code a passing grade, reminding us that legal process for an American civilian is much more like its service counterpart than civilian process under the codes of other countries.

Still, there are obvious differences between civil and military law. The one major difference, the presence in the latter of what is called "command influence," is an effect of that unique process that enables the convening officer of a court martial to pick the officers of his command to hear, judge, and sentence in the case at hand. This obviously creates the possibility of unfairness and bias, as Bishop says, for "even if the accused elects trial by a military judge sitting alone [an option the accused does have in the military] that judge is an officer of the service, with a professional interest in its discipline. . . ." The judge shares with the convening authority a concern to see that good order is maintained and this concern, although clearly legitimate, may interfere with the demands of blind justice. Bishop sensibly proposes greater independence for the judiciary, recommending the creation of permanent, tenured military courts with greater involvement of civilians. At the same time, however, he would leave with the commanding officer the discretionary authority to convene a proceeding when he believes circumstances call for one. This is an inoffensive and sensible accommodation that recognizes the special purposes of the military and the special responsibility of the commander.

Bishop chronicles the uneven and erratic labors of the civilian courts, including the Supreme Court, to balance the needs of the military with various general prescriptions of law such as the Bill of Rights. In the Court's view, power, here understood as military force, is not to be left unattended, and the military should not be treated—Bishop cites Justice Warren—"as an enclave beyond reach of the civilian courts." Specifically, the military should improve its record on First Amendment matters, especially with regard to politically inspired speech by members of the armed forces, speech critical of policies or leaders. Bishop recommends a rule that attends to relevant differences. He finds the civilian standard a decent model and argues that in those cases where speech is to be limited there must be a substantial basis for the conclusion that "the expression of opinion presents a clear and present danger to military discipline and efficiency." The military would be little damaged by this change. Bishop also recommends the elimination of Articles 133 and 134 of the Code of Military Justice, the so-called Devil's Articles, the first proscribing "conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman" and the second forbidding "all disorders and neglects to the prejudice of good order and discipline . . . [and] . . . all conduct of a nature to bring discredit upon the armed forces, and crimes and offenses not capital." Bishop would do away with them because they are nebulous, unnecessary in their present form (although the Supreme Court this past June in *Parker* v. *Levy* held, 5-3, that the articles are not unconstitutional), and because the offenses that merit proscription can be more precisely defined.

Toward the end of *Justice Under Fire* Bishop urges a reassessment of citizen involvement with military force. These are fascinating and important matters. Taking the issue of martial law, Bishop reminds us that the Constitution empowers Congress to summon the military force to execute the laws of the Union, and he cites Section 333 of Title 10 of the United States Code: "The President, by using the militia or the armed forces, or both, or by any other means, shall take such measures as he considers necessary to suppress, in a State, any insurrection, domestic violence, unlawful combination, or conspiracy, if it—(1) so hinders the execution of the laws . . . that any part or class of its people is deprived of a right, privilege, immunity, or protection. . . ; or (2) opposes or obstructs the execution of the laws of the United States or impedes the course of justice under those laws." It was Justice Jackson who observed that the Constitution is not a suicide pact and in pursuit of his duty to execute the laws the President may have to meet his

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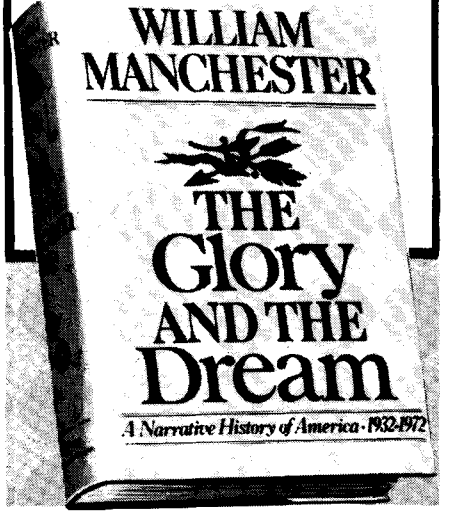

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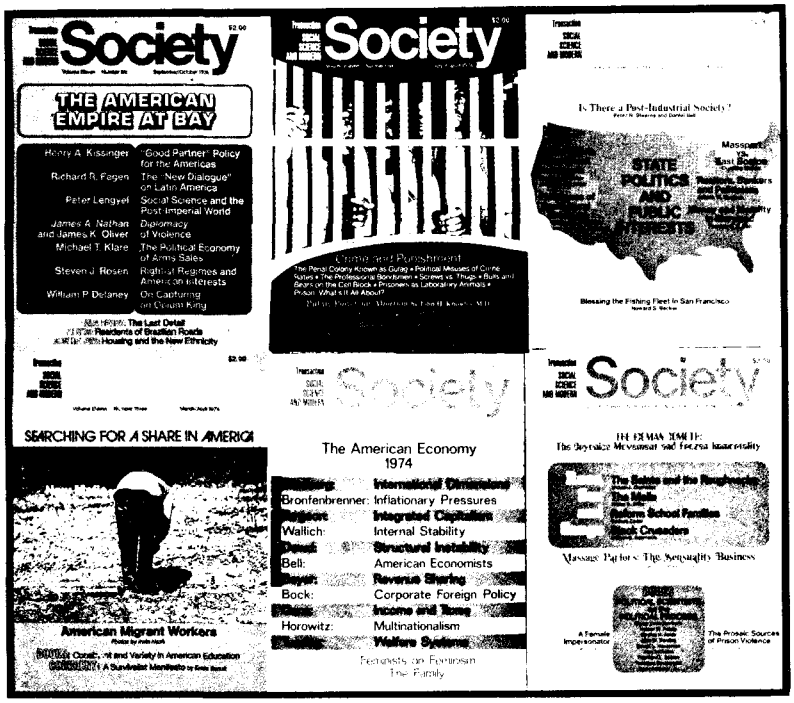
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duty of protecting life and liberty by resorting to the use of force *within* the country. (Little Rock *and* Boston come to mind.)

But to decide that military force can be used in some situations under the President's or a governor's authority does not mean that this decision should not be subject to independent scrutiny. Bishop reviews the Kent State situation in this connection. The parents of children killed in the shooting brought suit alleging a violation of the Civil Rights Act and Ohio statutes against wrongful death. The district court involved dismissed the complaint and in *Krause* v. *Rhodes* the Sixth Circuit Court affirmed. But a dissenting judge spoke for further limiting the discretion of the executive authority in this case by arguing for judicial review of the governor's decision to call in the troops. This view was spoken of approvingly by the Supreme Court, as Bishop predicted it would be, in *Scheuer* v. *Rhodes* this past April, with Chief Justice Burger stating in part that "A declaration of emergency by the executive of a state is entitled to great weight but it is not conclusive." In civilized societies deliberation must accompany the use of force. Despite Cicero, neither law nor intelligence need be silent during such times.

What is true at home applies as well to conflicts abroad, a subject addressed in Bishop's last chapter, on the international law of war. And thus we are reminded of the special shame of My Lai. But in this context Bishop also instructs us in a little-known but interesting matter. Despite accusations that Lieutenant Calley was made the scapegoat for innumerable "war crimes" committed in Vietnam in addition to My Lai, there have been at least 60 separate convictions of American servicemen on charges of murdering civilians in Vietnam. Bishop goes on to argue for even greater efforts to eliminate unnecessary force in war by instituting more inquiries into the justice of military actions: "Much more can and should be done especially by countries like the United States, which have a free press and a relatively enlightened public conscience, to prevent and punish war crimes by their own forces—regardless of whether there is any hope of reciprocity."

EFFORTS to improve military law usually begin by recommending that it become more like civilian law. This is Bishop's view as well as the view of more strident critics of the military. Indeed, the recommendations of a more permanent and more independent judiciary, the elimination of vague "blanket" offenses, entitlement to defense counsel as a matter of right—Bishop's recommendations—are based upon a confidence that "civilianizing" the military often serves the interests of justice. Of course this is true, but I am sure Bishop would agree that due respect for the way civilians operate should not lead to a judgment that the civilian mentality is always an improvement upon its military counterpart.

The case of Lieutenant Calley is again instructive here. Following Calley's conviction, President Nixon took it upon himself to release Calley to his quarters. In a letter to the President, Captain Aubrey Daniel, the prosecutor assigned to the case, wrote that he believed Nixon's intervention

> damaged the military judicial system and lessened any respect it may have gained as a result of the proceedings.
>
> Not only has respect for the legal process been weakened and the critics of the military judicial system been given support for their claims of command influence, the image of Lieutenant Calley, a man convicted of the premeditated murder of at least 21 unarmed and unresisting people, as a national hero has been enhanced, while at the same time support has been given to those persons who have so unjustly criticized the six loyal and honorable officers who have done this country a great service by fulfilling their duties as jurors so admirably.

Clearly, "military" is not a synonym for "backward" or "barbaric," just as "civilian" is not a synonym for "enlightened."

In the last analysis what is most important about Bishop's book for civilians is that it helps us to think fairly about the military, and that is good. The problems *Justice Under Fire* raises cannot be avoided by simply denouncing wars and all who fight them. The reviews and controls Bishop urges represent an accommodation by the users of force to the demands of reasonable men, in and out of the military. No institutional arrangement by itself can do the job, and in the end we need reasonable men, like Bishop, to recommend the balance that will best serve.

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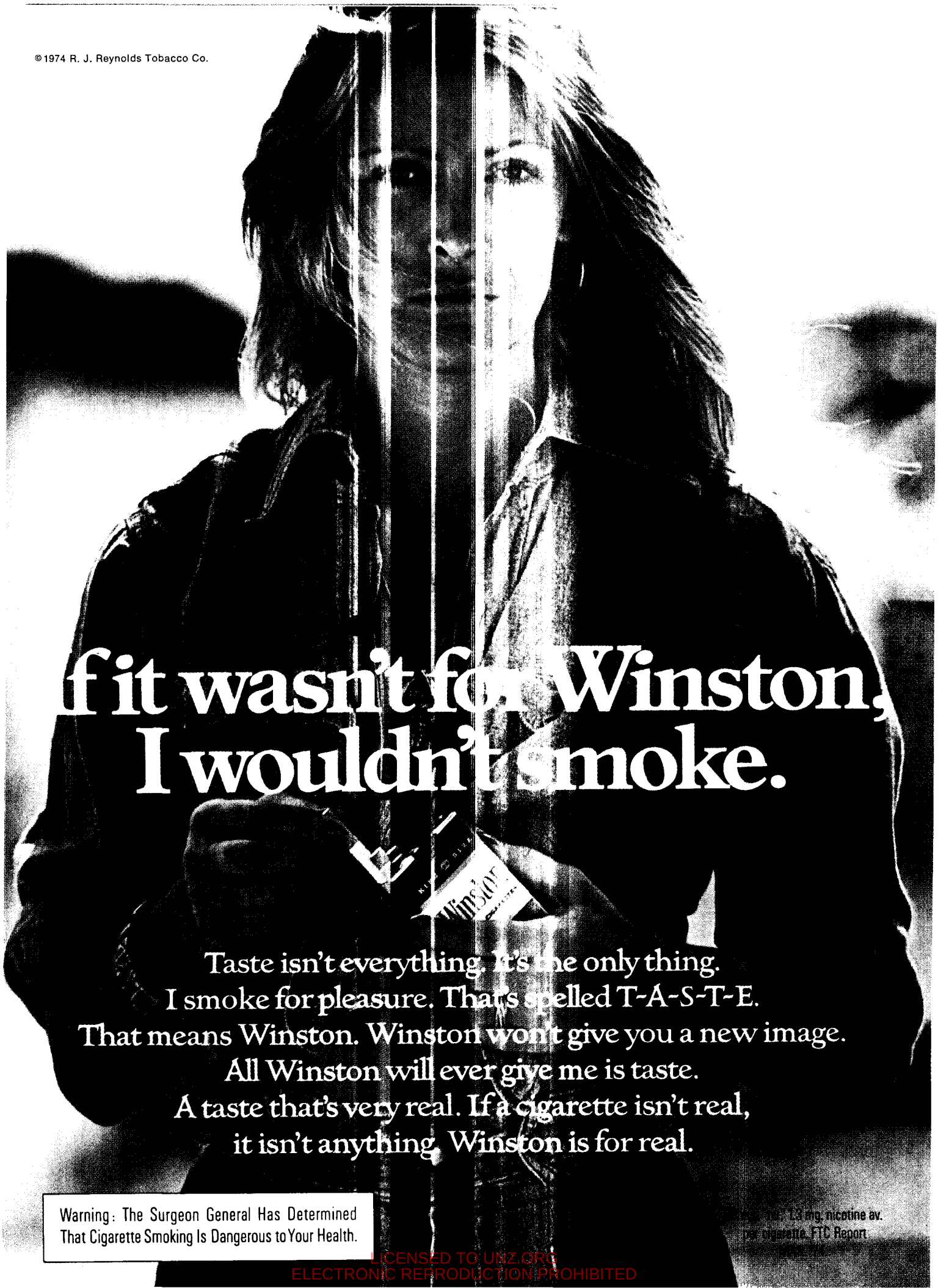

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